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ABSTRACT

This report describes activities and accomplishments of a 3-year project at the University of Rhode Island which paired specially trained native-speaking undergraduates with at-risk, linguistic minority classmates to study the content of courses that both were taking together. The native-speaking Fellow is trained in a 3-credit course and then organizes and conducts the 1-unit English-language study section under the close supervision of program staff. By the end of the third year, 56 Fellows had successfully completed the training course and 79 sections of the English-language study course had been offered in conjunction with 74 content courses; 75-80 nonnative-speaking students participated in the program, many of them several times. Retrospective self-reports from students and faculty were overwhelmingly positive. Formal evaluation at the beginning of semester 6 showed a dramatic increase in the retention rate of nonnative student (NNS) participants and significant improvement in grades for both NNS students and Fellows. The report includes an executive summary and project overview; description of the project's purpose, background and origins, and main features; and evaluation. Appendices include a letter to the funding agency about why the project was not continued, brochures and press releases, training course and English Language Study course materials, and an article, "The English Language Fellows Program," by Richard Blakely. (DB)

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The English Language Fellows Program

ED 414 843

University of Rhode Island
English Department
Kingston, R.I. 02881

Grant Number: P116B2-1168

Project Dates:

Starting: September 1, 1992
Ending: August 31, 1995
Number of Months: 36

Project Director:

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FIPSE Program Officer:

Charles Storey

Grant Award:

Year 1	$47,466
Year 2	$64,313
Year 3	$75,499
total:	$185,627

HE 030 829

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The English Language Fellows Program
Summary Paragraph

This program pairs specially-trained native-speaking undergraduates with at risk, linguistic minority classmates to study the content of courses that both are taking together. Woven into that study of course content, for the benefit of the nonnative speakers, is the study of language as it is used to communicate and understand the course material. This content-based English language study is generated by the specially-trained Fellow, who organizes and conducts the study sessions. For running those sessions, the Fellow is paid an hourly wage. For attending them regularly and doing the extra language study that they require, the English-learning students receive an extra unit of credit, in addition to the three units awarded for the content course.

Richard Blakely
229 Kenyon Ave.
Wakefield, R.I. 02881

"The English Language Fellows Program," College ESL, forthcoming.
Chapter on the program in Adult ESL, Problems and Policies; Trudy Smoke, ed. Forthcoming.

The English Language Fellows Program

The University of Rhode Island
Kingston R.I. 02881

Project director: Richard Blakely, 13 rue Le Brun, 75013 Paris, France
(tel: 1-45 87 07 60; email: BLAKELYWIART@EWORLD.COM)

Executive Summary:

A. Project Overview:

This project was conceived while attending a conference on content-based language learning at Brown University. I was already familiar with the Brown Writing Fellows Program and during the conference it occurred to me that a possible way of solving "the ESL problem" at URI might be through a peer tutorial program similar to the W.F.P. at Brown (which since its inception twelve years ago has been replicated throughout the country), except that in this case the Fellows would be native-speakers and the people they would be tutoring would be nonnative-speaking (NNS) classmates in courses both happened to be taking together. The whole program would be content-based in that the language learning would take place while focusing on other academic subjects---geology, literature, economics, etc.

The first year of the project was spent creating and eventually getting approval of two new courses; a 3-unit course to train the native speaking (NS) students who would become peer tutors, and a 1-unit language study section that qualifying NNS students could take in conjunction with another 3-unit content course. These 1-unit English-learning sections would be organized and conducted by the Fellows in the program, under close supervision of the program staff. Multiple sections of this course would be offered every semester, depending on the number of Fellows and the number of courses they were taking in which there were nonnative speakers. Each of these one-unit study sections could accommodate up to three NNS students, and these students would be allowed to continue taking these special sections as long as their English continued to need improvement.

In spring semester, 1993, the first section of the Fellows training course was taught and our first group of Fellows started conducting the 1-unit study sections to NNS classmates the following term. By the end of the 3rd year, 56 Fellows had successfully completed the training course, 79 sections of ELS 201 had been offered in conjunction with 74 content courses, ranging from African American Studies to Zoology, and 75-80 NNS students had participated in the program, many of them several times. Retrospective self reports from participating students and faculty were overwhelmingly positive, some saying the program had changed their lives for the better, and corrected misperceptions they had had about immigrants and ESL. Hard data collected at the beginning of semester 6 corroborated this positive subjective feedback by showing a dramatic increase in the rate of retention of NNS participants and a significant improvement in grades, both of NNS students and of the Fellows.

At the beginning of Year 4, 39 Fellows were poised to conduct sections of ELS 201 in as many as 134 content courses for well over 100 NNS classmates. Plans were made to start replicating the project at six other American colleges, hopefully with the help of another grant from FIPSE intended to "disseminate proven reforms."

Unfortunately, the president of URI decided at the last minute to withdraw support for this proposal. Moreover, because of a severe shortfall in the budget, the ELF program was virtually dismantled and all other services provided to NNS students at the university were drastically reduced.

B. Purpose:

The original purpose of this project was to address the perplexing phenomenon of increasing numbers of NNS students at URI who when they graduated were for all intents

and purposes illiterate. While setting up the project we learned that this was an inextricable part of a much larger, tangled web of problems which has come to be popularly known and generically referred to as "the ESL problem." The underlying cause of that problem was the widespread misperception, among NNS students, but reinforced by NS teachers and students, that ESL was remedial, and than not knowing English in this country, or not having completely mastered it before coming to college, was something to be ashamed of. So we realized early on that for the ELF program to work, we had to start by changing attitudes and correcting misperceptions.

C. Background and origins:

Twenty-five years ago there were so few NNS undergraduates at URI that their presence was hardly noticeable. Most of them were visiting this country on student visas to return to their homelands after a year or two, or after getting their degrees. To accommodate the English language needs of this small group, two special ESL courses were designed. By 1992 the situation had completely changed. Fewer and fewer international students were coming to URI at the undergraduate level and more and more students signing up to take these courses were children of immigrants who had fled war and economic hardship in their own countries. The English language needs of these immigrant students were far different from those of the original customers of "Writing 112 and 122." The grant from FIPSE provided a catalyst for revising these courses and making them part of a whole new program, centered around the ELF program, that met the needs of this much more varied and different group of students. This program was called ESL (because of the negative connotations of the term), but simply English Language Studies.

in the first year of the program, two other names were changed, as a result of looking more closely at what we wanted to do. In place of "peer tutor," we decided to use the more egalitarian "fellow," and we decided to refer to students the program was designed to serve not as nonnative speakers, but as English-learners (E-Ls). These changes were not simply a matter of appearances and public relations. They actually changed the roles of the program participants, and in the long run helped change some of those attitudes and correct some misperceptions.

D. Project description:

The main features of the ELF program at URI were the Fellows training course, ELS 200, and the special study sections for the English Learners, ELS 201. The key assumption underlying the content-based language sections was that they were worthy of academic credit and therefore should be credit-bearing. In the formal course proposal arguments for assigning real credit to the 1-unit study sections were made as strongly as possible, and they must have been convincing, for both courses were approved unanimously by the six committees that reviewed them, and they became permanent offerings of the university by the beginning of year 3.

Also in this year, two reforms were adapted which made the program much more efficient and effective. The first was the establishment of two computer networks that greatly facilitated communication among Fellows, their E-L classmates, the project director, and the students in the Fellows training course. The second was the enlistment of "senior Fellows: to help take over the increasingly heavy burden of running the program. Hence the ELF program was not only student centered, as it evolved it was becoming more and more student run.

E. Evaluation:

When one considers that this pilot project was actually functioning for only two years, beginning in fall, 1993, when the first group of Fellows were ready to conduct the first sections of ELS 201, its results are quite remarkable. In spring semester of 1994, the average grade of NNS students in courses where they were working with Fellows was 2.92. This compares to an overall average in those courses, for native and nonnative speakers alike, of 2.34. Confirming our expectations that conducting sections of ELS 201 would have a beneficial effect on one's own grades, the average grade for Fellows in those same courses was 3.62. Both the grades of the Fellows and those of their NNS classmates in those courses were significantly higher than their overall GPA.

In the fall of 1994, the average grade of the 34 NNS students in courses for which they were taking concurrent sections of ELS 201 was 2.80. The overall class average in those same courses was 2.49. The average grade for Fellows in those same courses: 3.45.

Another goal of this project that can be judged qualitatively was increased retention of the NNS students on campus. As of the end of fall semester, 1994, 42 NNS students had participated in the program. Of those 42, one had by then dropped out. The rest were still pursuing their studies at URI. These figures give the program a retention rate of 97.6%. The average, overall retention rate at the University of Rhode Island is 54%. Based on figures supplied by the Public Information Division of the Office of Educational Research, the estimated rate of retention of linguistic minorities nationally is between 30 and 35%!

All of the subjective feedback, in the form of interviews and evaluative questionnaires from participating students and faculty, was also overwhelmingly positive, indicating that the ELF Program had indeed begun to change some people's minds about ESL.

F. Summary and conclusion:

To anyone interested in setting up a similar program at their own institution, I would make a number of suggestions, but here are the three most important: 1) Getting such a program up and running is a full-time job. In addition to a project director, staff for a similar-sized program should include some sort of research or teaching assistant, and secretarial support. 2) The study sections conducted by the specially-trained native speakers must be credit bearing, and that credit must count towards graduation. 3) In order for such a project to succeed and prosper it must have, *a priori*, the unqualified, enthusiastic support of the administration, and that support must be in writing.

G. Appendix:

In the full Appendix at the end of the main report, in addition to many program-related documents, I have included a "Letter to FIPSE," explaining why, in my opinion, the ELF program was not continued at URI.

The English Language Fellows Program
at the University of Rhode Island
Final Report

"The foundation for a successful undergraduate experience is proficiency in the written and the spoken word." Ernest Boyer in College: The Undergraduate Experience in America.

A. Project overview.

The idea for this project was conceived during a weekend conference on Content-Area language instruction at Brown University where FIPSE was very much in evidence. Two program officers were attending the conference and a number of people giving papers were reporting on FIPSE-sponsored projects. I was already familiar with the Brown Writing Fellows Program and during the conference it occurred to me that a possible way of solving "the ESL problem" at URI might be through a peer tutorial program similar to the W.F.P. at Brown (which since its inception twelve years ago has been replicated throughout the country), except that in this case the Fellows would be native-speakers and the people they would be tutoring would be nonnative-speaking (NNS) classmates in courses both happened to be taking together. The whole program would be content-based in that the language learning would take place while focusing on other academic subjects---geology, literature, economics, etc.

Towards the end of the conference I mentioned the idea to John Grandin (himself a recipient of multiple FIPSE grants) who introduced me to Sandra Newkirk, his program officer, who encouraged me to apply for a grant.

Notification of funding for my proposal for "A Peer Tutorial Program in Content Area ESL" came in mid-summer, 1992. Immediately I set about laying the groundwork, which entailed, throughout the first semester, writing proposals for two new courses at URI and ushering them through committees, publicizing the project and its objectives (on campus, within the state, and nationally), recruiting the first batch of native-speaking (NS) students to take the training course in the spring, and engaging in a vigorous lobbying campaign among faculty and administrators to ensure that the project would have a welcome reception once it was up and running.

The first of the new courses was the Fellows training course, which was to be a regular three-credit course at the second year (200) level, "on ESL theory, practice, and tutorial techniques." This course was to be offered every semester until the end of the three-year pilot project, and from then on every other semester, to maintain a constant pool of 40-50 Fellows. Precedent for such a course had been amply established by a similar course for the Writing Fellows at Brown, and my graduate assistant and I did not think it

would be difficult explaining the rationale for such a course or convincing faculty of its academic merit. Indeed, the first time the training course was offered at URI it was as a seminar in the Honors Program.

We were much more apprehensive about getting approval for the second course, and especially about getting it approved for credit. This was to be a one-unit, language study section that qualifying NNS students could take in conjunction with another 3-unit content course. These 1-unit English-learning sections would be organized and conducted by the Fellows in the program, under close supervision of the program staff. Multiple sections of this course would be offered every semester, depending on the number of Fellows and the number of courses they were taking in which there were nonnative speakers. Each of these one-unit study sections could accommodate up to three NNS students, and these students would be allowed to continue taking these special sections as long as their English continued to need improvement.

There was no precedent here. The relatively few programs where Content Area ESL was offered for credit were structured either on the "adjunct" or the "sheltered" model. In the first case, a language course is offered parallel to a history course, for example, and taught by an ESL specialist, with the NNS students taking both courses. In the second, a separate history course is offered specifically for NNS students, and the instructor, preferably someone trained in history and ESL, weaves language teaching into the teaching of history. In both cases, it is a course taught by a teacher to a classroom full of students. What we were proposing was completely different---basically bringing together two different types of students and having them work together in small groups.

At first, even people at FIPSE expressed reservations about the idea of granting credit for this type of collaborative activity. For us though, it was a cornerstone of the program and key to its success. We also thought there were strong arguments to be made in favor of the idea, and in our course proposal for ELS 201, "Content-based English language study," those arguments were put forth in detail. (See Section D, below.)

By the end of year 2 of the pilot project, both the Fellows training course, ELS 200, and the one unit ELS 201, had been approved, unanimously, by the six committees that reviewed them (the second committee consisting of a very large, often contentious, and usually very divided English department), thereby making them permanent offerings of the university curriculum and taking the first important step towards institutionalization of the program. Qualifying NNS students could enroll in as many as three sections of ELS 201 every semester, and they could take the course, for credit, along with different content courses, as many as twelve times. Thus it became possible for NNS students at URI to

continue studying English, in a manner that was relevant to their career plans and built into their academic curriculum, throughout their years as undergraduates.

By the end of the third year, 56 Fellows had successfully completed the training course, 79 sections of ELS 201 had been offered in conjunction with 74 content courses, ranging from African American Studies to Zoology, and 75-80 NNS students had participated in the program, many of them several times. Retrospective self reports from participating students and faculty were overwhelmingly positive, some saying the program had changed their lives for the better, and corrected misperceptions they had had about immigrants and ESL. Hard data collected at the beginning of semester 6 corroborated this positive subjective feedback by showing a dramatic increase in the rate of retention of NNS participants and a significant improvement in grades, both of NNS students and of the Fellows. (This data is summarized in Section E.)

At the beginning of Year 4, 39 Fellows were poised to conduct sections of ELS 201 in as many as 134 content courses for well over 100 NNS classmates. Thus, the program was on the verge of living up to its promise to provide ESL instruction to more students, in a more relevant manner, than traditional courses in ESL per se. (Every semester URI offers two ESL courses for a maximum of 40 students, but enrollment in those courses is declining steadily and they are often canceled at the last minute.) By this time many ESL professionals throughout the country had learned about the program and had expressed an interest in replicating it in some way on their own campuses. In the spring of 1995 extensive plans were made between URI and six other U.S. colleges to apply for another FIPSE grant under a special competition designed to "disseminate proven reforms." Receiving the grant would have provided seed money to establish similar programs at each of the six institutions.

Unfortunately, at the very last minute, the president of URI decided to withdraw his support for this proposal. Moreover, citing severe cuts in the budget, his administration also decided to drastically "scale down" the ELF program. As I said in a memo to the president when I heard about these plans, in this case "scaling down" would much more accurately have been called "pulling the plug." From the time FIPSE support ran out in August, direction of the program (until then a full-time job) was to be taken over by a part-timer who would receive compensation for teaching one course. As for the Fellows, most of them would no longer be paid in cash, since funds to pay them had been cut to a fraction of what was needed to continue. Instead they would be encouraged to continue conducting sections of ESL 201 on a volunteer basis, or they could choose the option of themselves receiving academic credit for conducting those sessions, as an independent study.[1]

It is clear today that the URI administration wants to give the impression that the ELF program is still continuing to function as it was originally designed. Some might even believe this. I can say unequivocally, and with great regret, that this is not true. It is as if, at the end of the pilot project, the pilot was forced to eject (hit, no less, by friendly fire) and the project went down in flames. Certain people on the site are claiming that the wreckage, by some miracle, is still in working order, but there is reason to remain skeptical.

Looking back, one can say that in the end the ELF program at URI fell victim to the very ignorance it had been created to dispel, for despite a loudly proclaimed policy in favor of "multicultural diversity," the administration made it very clear, when push came to shove, that its priorities did not include improving the plight of NNS students on campus, all of whom, however, were from different cultures. During its brief existence the program did have a beneficial and lasting effect on many people who became involved with it---the NS Fellows, participating faculty, and most important the NNS participants---and it is on these positive results that this report will focus, after describing the situation that brought it about.

B. Purpose: describing the problem.

At the outset this project was designed to address the problem of rising numbers of NNS students who by the time they graduate from college are for all intents and purposes illiterate. The problem came home to me when a NNS student who had taken two ESL courses in his first year at URI returned four years later to take a literature course I was teaching, and almost failed. Most disturbing to both of us was the obvious fact that in those four years, while taking courses towards his degree in Accounting, Tran's English had not only not improved, it had actually deteriorated.[2] Even more distressing was the fact that Tran was not alone. Many of his friends who had taken ESL in college, or for many years before that in school, were in the same boat.

The ELF program was originally designed as a solution to this "local" problem (which we soon discovered was not restricted to URI). But while setting up the program, my T.A. and I realized that it was an inextricable part of a much larger, tangled web of problems which has come to be popularly known and generically referred to as "the ESL problem." One need only mention the phrase to anyone involved in public education in this country, at any level, to receive a nod of recognition (or a sigh of despair).

Because of the awesome complexity of this problem it is difficult to discuss it in a logical fashion, laying out the causes one by one. What follows will be an attempt to identify some of the threads and knots that my T.A. and I discovered, sometimes much to our surprise, in hopes that someday the problem will be clearly understood and the web

untangled. One must bear in mind though (in fact it will be obvious), that all the threads are connected.

The most surprising obstacle we encountered in putting this program together was at the beginning of the second year, when we opened our first sections of ELS 201 in conjunction with several heavily-enrolled content courses and hardly any NNS students came forward to enroll in them. In the end we were able to convince ten nonnative-speakers to participate (and they were finally glad they did), but it was an amazingly hard sell!

What we discovered was that NNS students were reluctant to get involved with the program, notwithstanding the extra credit, because they "didn't want anything to do with ESL." As one of the students in an advanced English literature course said that semester, when offered the opportunity of studying with a native-speaker (she herself had been born and raised in Guatemala, and had spent the last ten years in the U.S.), "I never had to take ESL and I don't intend to start now."[3]

This aversion among non-native speakers for ESL, despite the fact that it is what they need most, was the subject of an article I wrote that was publishedthe following year in the Providence Journal.[4] The original title was "Drowning in the Mainstream," and I have included it in the Appendix because it may help shed light on this phenomenon.

Another aspect of the ESL problem that makes it more complex and even more urgently in need of a solution is the number of students involved. Between 1985 and 1991 the population of K-12 students in the U.S. with certified limited English proficiency rose by 51.3%, to a total of 2.3 million children. By the year 2000 this population will have grown two and a half times as fast as the overall student population in those grades.[5] According to data now being released by the 1990 Census, over 30 million people living in the U.S. at that time were nonnative speakers of English.[6]

But even these figures are problematic. It is common knowledge that large numbers of "illegal aliens" went uncounted during the last census, either because they did not want to be counted, or, as some have claimed, because certain politicians did not want them counted. In any event, any effort to get accurate information about numbers of immigrants or nonnative speakers in this country leads into foggy terrain. Until 1992 at URI there was no attempt to count or keep track of students for whom English was not their first language. They literally did not count. One of the first accomplishments of the ELF program was a revision in the letter of acceptance prospective students were to send back to the Admissions Office, so that it included a little box that they could check off if they spoke a language other than English at home. Probably half of the incoming NNS students, including those with very limited English proficiency, and therefore at great risk

of failure their first year, refused to check the box. When we got to know them better and asked them why, the invariable response was that they were afraid they would have been forced to take ESL. They were also afraid of being labeled outsiders---which leads to another knot in the web.

Because ESL is usually considered remedial, or worse, because people unable to speak English fluently in the U.S. are often considered cognitively deficient, programs designed to provide support for these people tend almost always to be marginal. If courses taken by native speakers are "mainstream," then courses designed specifically to help NNS students master English must exist in a stagnant backwater from which one is wise to escape as soon as possible, in the interest of good health. This perceived marginality of most ESL programs in schools and colleges means that those programs are often homeless, not fitting into any pre-existing academic program or department, and the first to be cut when the budget gets tight. It also saps morale within the program at every level, resulting in resentment and lack of motivation of students who are forced to take these courses, to inferior salaries and absence of security for teaching staff.

There seem to be two reasons for the marginal status of ESL in the U.S.---two attitudes that overlap and interact and can be seen as typically American.[7] They could in fact be called the original American sins. They are arrogance and ignorance. The first is aggressive and belligerent, stemming from the belief that since the U.S. has won every war it ever fought (almost) and is the richest, most developed country in the world (or used to be), anyone from another country, speaking another language, is by definition inferior and deficient. One finds this arrogance in the wording of laws proposed by advocates of "English Only," and in angry editorials written in frustration at picking up the phone to call the hospital and getting a receptionist who speaks with a foreign accent and "can't understand plain English."[8]

Ignorance is more benign, a kind of national provincialism, that is rooted in America's historical self image as a huge physical and economic island, cut off from the rest of the world and sufficient unto itself. One finds this attitude in the naive but deep-seeded conviction that anyone can learn English in a few years, if they really want to, and in its corollary (sometimes devastating to ES/FL programs) that anyone who does speak it can teach it, obviously. It is also revealed in the opinion that students who do not speak fluent English do not belong in an American university. This pervasive ignorance helps to understand the continuously embattled status of foreign language programs in the U.S.---in a crisis they're the second thing to go, after ESL. It also helps explain an utter lack of comprehension of what it is like to be a foreigner in this country (strange, since most of our parents or grandparents were foreigners), and of the fact that learning English for a

Cambodian can be just as just as daunting and time-consuming as learning Cambodian would be for a native speaker of American English.

One would not expect to find these benighted attitudes at a university, but they are there, sometimes at the highest levels. One day the president of a state university in the northeast calls a special ceremony to announce that despite the budget shortfall he has approved plans to build a large new multicultural center in the middle of campus. A few days later the local paper quotes him as saying that any nonnative speakers who are not yet fluent in English should not come to the university, but should go to the community college instead, where they will be better served.

So if one wants to untangle the ESL problem at one's own campus the first thing to do is educate one's fellow educators about the existence and complexity of the problem. And to convince them that the problem is urgent. Perhaps the best way to do this is to have them recognize that it is directly linked to another problem that is the major problem facing the world today---a problem which makes all others, by comparison, remotely academic and irrelevant. That of course is the problem of overpopulation. As the world population grows, so will wars and famine and economic instability and so, as a result, will hordes of refugees fleeing one country, one culture, into another, either by invitation or by force. Proponents of "English Only" and of restricting immigration should make no mistake. The problem they are obsessed with is not going to go away. It is just beginning. Their so-called solutions will only drive it underground, temporarily. In this increasingly fragile, interdependent world, the real solution lies not in throwing up borders and closing minds, but in keeping them open at all costs. Seen in this light, communication is the key to survival, and language is not only the basis of communication, it's all we've got.

C. Background and origins: getting the names right:

Twenty-five years ago there were so few NNS undergraduates at URI that their presence was hardly noticeable. Most of them were visiting this country on student visas to return to their homelands after a year or two, or after getting their degrees. To accommodate the English language needs of this small group, two special courses were designed and offered as part of the new writing program: WRT 112 and WRT 122. These courses were an ESL option for those international students who would have difficulty passing the two writing courses required of all NS undergraduates, and they could be taken in their place. Thus the original purpose of these courses was to accommodate international students and to attract them to the University. In the interest of "global awareness" it was considered good to have a certain number of foreign students on campus (often thought of

as "exchange" students), and of course these students, many from oil rich countries, paid full tuition.

By 1992 the situation had completely changed. Fewer and fewer international students were coming to URI at the undergraduate level and more and more students signing up to take WRT 112 and 122 were children of immigrants who had fled war and economic hardship in their own countries. In Rhode Island, the majority of these students at that time were from Southeast Asia. (For some reason, perhaps because of the abundance of abandoned housing in certain parts of town, Providence was a principle center of resettlement for Hmong, Cambodian, and Vietnamese refugees.)[9] The English language needs of these immigrant students were far different from those of the original customers of WRT 112 and 122. While immigrant students come to the university with fairly good oral skills (speaking and listening) their writing and reading, as seen above, are often woefully deficient. International students often know more about English grammar than their NS classmates. Immigrant students know even less---that is, nothing. While that is fine, perhaps, for the native speakers in the mainstream English classes in high school, it is one more factor that puts NNS students in the public schools at a disadvantage.[10] At any rate, the end result was another twist to the ESL problem and another good reason for the ELF program. In an ESL classroom it is almost impossible to balance the course so that it is equally beneficial to both types of students. But when a trained peer is working with an international student from Japan and another who immigrated to the U.S. from Cambodia seven years ago, she can divide her attention between the two and give both of them what they need most.[11]

Although the kind of students enrolling in 112/122 had drastically changed by 1992, what we found when we were setting up the program was that most members of the faculty, even faculty in the English Department where those courses were housed, were unaware of that change. For them, students who needed ESL were foreigners, and the new FIPSE-sponsored project was going to increase enrollments of foreign exchange students at URI.

We knew that as the program spread throughout the University over the next three years this misperception would gradually be corrected. More and more faculty, through contact with the Fellows, advocates of their NNS classmates, would learn the truth about growing numbers of NNS students in their courses and would become more sensitive to their needs. But we also knew it was essential, from the outset, to clearly describe what the program was and whom it was designed to serve. The FIPSE grant provided for two new courses to be added to the curriculum and posed two questions that needed to be answered: where should those courses be offered and what should they be called? Since I

was a member of the English Department and since the courses had to do primarily with English, it seemed logical at the time to include them among the offerings of that department.[12]

The second question, what these courses would be named, was harder to answer. Although writing was going to be an important component of both courses, it was certainly not the only, nor even the main component, so it would not be appropriate to put them in the Writing Program, where ESL had been lodged, rather uncomfortably, until then. The English Department had no separate rubric for ESL, and even if it had, I felt this wouldn't have been appropriate either. Even before the project began and before I learned of the deep aversion NNS students have for "anything to do with ESL," I myself had not found the name appealing or even accurate.[13]

In the fall of 1992, no doubt because of the attention focused on ESL at URI by the FIPSE grant, the Dean of Arts and Sciences formed a special committee to explore "the ESL problem" at the University and come up with recommendations. The first recommendation made by that committee, chaired by the director of the FIPSE project, was to create a new course designation, called English Language Studies (ELS), under which all existing ESL or EFL courses, and the two new courses created by the FIPSE project, would henceforth be grouped. After some discussion, this recommendation was approved by the English Department, and went on to final approval by the Dean. Hence, the FIPSE grant was a catalyst for changing the name of all courses designed to serve NNS students at the University, and, as far as I was concerned, a change in what you call something is the first necessary step in changing how you see it.

Two other names were changed that year, as a result of looking more closely at what we were naming. The first was the name of the program itself. While walking around campus, talking to students and faculty about what we were hoping to do, "A Peer Tutorial Program in Content-Based English as a Second or Foreign Language" became a heavy burden. In was also not quite accurate. The first thing to change was that cumbersome term "peer tutor" . . .

> The word "peer" pops up so often in academic language these days that it has become another meaningless buzz word. Also, the deeper I got into planning for the "tutor training seminar," the more clearly I saw that we did not want to train these students to become tutors. The word tutor brings to mind an image of an individualized teacher, an authority on some subject who is usually paid to help someone else catch up on that subject, often by doing remedial work. Tori Haring-Smith [founder of the Writing Fellows Program at Brown, and consultant to the project during the first year] helped me understand the dangers in having our trained undergraduates perceive themselves, and therefore having them be perceived by their classmates in the study groups, as authority figures. And in fact it is not simply a matter of skillful semantics, of choosing the right word to camouflage or diminish an aura of authority. These students will be taking the

courses right along with their NNS classmates in the study sessions, learning the course material with them. Hence, as I stated in the syllabus for the training course, they should see themselves "not as teachers, nor even as tutors, in the strictest sense, but as **active collaborators in learning**, whose knowledge of English as a native speaker will help [their] non-native speaking classmates to improve their English while studying course content."

And so, taking the lead from the program at Brown, we decided to call this group of students not peer tutors, after all, but "fellows," and the subject they would be helping their NNS classmates to master, while studying other courses, would not be ESL or EFL, but simply the English language. Hence: The English Language Fellows Program.[14]

Of course, as several people have pointed out, "Fellow" does have unfortunate sexist connotations. In the latest edition of the American Heritage Dictionary the first definition is "A man or boy," and then, heaven forbid, "A boyfriend"! But what else in English is there? Colleague? Associate? Friend? Cohort?[15] Because of its association with images of work and labor, "comrade" was a tempting alternative, but in attempting to get corporate funding for the program at a later date it would certainly have proven to be an even greater burden.

So finally, after consultation with the students in the first training course, we decided to stick with Fellows. After all, they had been learning that languages are constantly evolving organisms. Lexicons change not only by new words being added to them but by existing words being stretched to fit new meanings. We were willing to bet that within the decade "Fellow," thanks in part to our program, would come to lose its strictly masculine overtones. The eventual de-sexization of "Fellow" was to be one of the program's extra fringe benefits. In the meantime there was always "fella."

The other name that changed that year, before the program actually got off the ground, and again in collaboration with the students in the first training course, was the designation of the students they were going to be working with the following year. For reasons discussed above, calling them ESL or EFL students was not desirable. Even less so, of course, "immigrants," or "internationals" or "foreign students." The most common designation, "nonnative speakers," which I have used here so far and elsewhere in talking about the program, mainly because of its recognizability, did not seem satisfactory either, once we started thinking about it. Why define a person by something he or she cannot do? Students who had spent time abroad, trying to adapt to other cultures, said they would have found it strange, as well as tiresome and discouraging, to have constantly been referred to as nonnative-speakers, as outsiders, in a word. And so we decided on the term English-Learners, or E-Ls.

D. Project description:

The main features of the ELF program at URI were the Fellows training course, ELS 200, and the special study sections for the English Learners, ELS 201. The key assumption underlying the content-based language sections was that they were worthy of academic credit and therefore should be credit-bearing. Otherwise the program would be flawed from the beginning. Good reasons for awarding credit for ESL at any level had already be articulated before the program began,[16] and as mentioned above, in the formal course proposal for 201 we re-stated those arguments as convincingly as we knew how, and came up with a few more.

First, one must bear in mind that the language material to be learned in the supplementary sessions is not remedial. Their purpose is not to reinforce deficient study habits or go back over something a student was taught before but never learned. It is to improve her mastery of a foreign language---in effect to help her learn language through content. In recognition of the value of combining the study of language and content, "Language Across the Curriculum" programs are springing up all over the country. In all of those programs, language combined with content study is either an integral part of a credit-bearing course or is awarded extra credit towards graduation, as well it should be. At St. Olaf College, for example, a native-speaking American student who takes a course in Religious Studies, taught in English, and at the same time attends an additional discussion section of the same course in French, will receive additional credit for the work she does in the extra session. Most would agree that this is simply granting credit where credit is due. Now, since we give credit to native speaking American students for learning a foreign language at an intermediate level, shouldn't we also award credit to non-native speakers, who, while taking university courses native speakers find difficult, continue to develop their English language skills at a level that is very advanced?

Another reason credit should be awarded for the supplementary study sessions is that this will help make them academically meaningful and give them genuine scholastic status, so that both the Language Fellow and the NNS student, as well as the campus at large, will take them seriously. A common weakness of many supplementary instruction programs that do not give credit is that after the first few weeks, or during periods of intense study, such as mid-terms or finals, when students especially need the services offered by those programs, they stop attending. And who can blame them? Many of these students are putting themselves through college, so they must work long hours in addition to carrying exceptionally heavy course loads in areas such as science and math. When their schedules get too tight for everything to fit, it's only normal that they drop the course they're not taking for credit. But again, one must make a distinction between more traditional supplementary instruction programs, designed primarily to review course material and sharpen students' study skills---a task which may well be considered remedial---and the English Language Fellows Program, which in addition to reviewing course material, requires study of language features that the student has never done before. It is for this additional language study that the extra credit is to be awarded.

A student who comes to URI not knowing how to play the piano very well, but with a strong desire to learn, is allowed to repeat a 2-unit course in piano performance, for credit, as often as he wishes, and as long as his instructor thinks he can continue to make progress. This makes perfect sense, since learning to master a musical instrument takes years and years of diligent practice. Furthermore, in gaining mastery of the piano, this student is learning a skill which he may use, for profit, throughout the rest of his life---as a teacher, for example.

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Gaining fluency in a foreign language also takes many years, and when it is the dominant language of the country in which one is going to spend the rest of one's life, learning it is not a luxury, it is a necessity for survival.

At the end of Year 1, both ELS 200 and 201 were provisionally approved as "X" or experimental courses. At URI an X course can be offered twice before being re-considered as a permanent curricular offering, or rejected. Based on the success of these two X courses the first two semesters they were offered, both were accepted as permanent offerings by the beginning of Year 3.

ELS 200:

The prerequisite for admission to ELS 200, and therefore as a potential Fellow, was "permission of the Program Director." That permission was granted on the basis of a two-page application form, including space for a short essay on why the applicant wanted to become a Fellow, three letters of recommendation from faculty or employers, and a twenty-minute interview. The interviews were conducted by a panel consisting of the project director, the graduate assistant, and one or two experienced Fellows, and they were held during the last two weeks of classes, so that letters could be sent out in time for students who were accepted in the program to make the necessary changes in their schedule to accommodate the training course.

As the program evolved, we found that one of the best resources for recruiting students was the network of faculty who either had already participated in the program, or who understood it clearly and were committed to its success. Foreign language faculty were especially helpful in this regard, for obvious reasons. About halfway through the semester we would send a memo to these professors (the list kept growing; by the end of the third year it included over 200 names) asking them to send back the names of one or two students in courses they were currently teaching who were truly outstanding. To these students we would send a special invitation to apply to the program. Similar letters were sent to incoming students with exceptionally high SAT scores (1200 or higher), and to students who made the honor role (with a GPA of 3.5 or better) during their first semester at the University.

What we discovered, predictably, was that high SAT scores or GPAs were not always a reliable indicator of what it took be a good Fellow. What it did take is not easy to answer. One of the most timid students I ever met went on to become one of our most effective Fellows. Another candidate whose grades were certainly not impressive and whose written English left much to be desired turned out to be one of the most helpful and accommodating to her E-L classmates, who all became devoted to her. But while such anomalies will always crop up, and help make running such a program so rewarding, it is

possible to summarize certain factors that we came to look for in reading the essays and conducting the interviews.

The first consideration was the applicant's year at the University. Obviously it made more sense to accept students in their first, or possibly second year, since they would be around longer. Also, NNS students were more in evidence, and their English language needs more immediately apparent, in the large "gen ed" courses that students tend to take in their freshman and sophomore year. The further a Fellow majoring in Communicative Disorders progressed towards his degree, the fewer E-Ls he was likely to have in those increasingly specialized courses. To offset this tendency we did advise the Fellows to save some "gen ed" courses for their junior and senior years, and those who were not locked into a rigidly structured curriculum, such as Pharmacy or Electrical Engineering, were usually able to do so. But as a general rule, as the program grew and we were able to become more choosy, we tended only to choose students in their freshman year, or those who still had lots of "gen eds" to take.

Something else we looked for in potential Fellows, was a proven interest in other cultures, and better yet, a degree of fluency in another language---another reason many of our Fellows came from the Foreign Language department. The reasoning, which tended to hold true, was that if you were going to help someone learn your own language it was important to understand what went into learning a language---to know, for example, that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to "pick up" a second language simply by rubbing elbows with native speakers for a couple of years. In other words, they needed to appreciate the amount of work and perseverance that goes into learning a second language, and to want to make that work, for their E-L classmates, as enjoyable as possible. Students interested in becoming Fellows did not have to "know grammar" as they often asked, timorously, before applying to the program. We knew that their understanding of the complexities of their own language would grow as they gained experience trying to explain those complexities to E-L classmates. Nor for that matter did they have to be native speakers. A few of the Fellows were still English-learners themselves, although at a very advanced level. Their insights proved very valuable to others in the training course, and their understanding of problems faced by other E-L classmates was built in.

Finally, we were looking for something we referred to rather vaguely as "intellectual and emotional maturity." Listing the qualities we grouped under that heading would make this sound like the Boy Scout Handbook. ("A Fellow is reliable, resourceful, adaptable and articulate. S/he is diplomatic and self-confident, . . .") But what we meant, basically, is that in setting up and conducting those sections of 201, Fellows took on a lot of responsibility, therefore they had to be responsible. Those few students who were

admitted to the training course and who started missing a lot of classes or arriving late for no good reason were encouraged to drop the course, or their absence resulted in a low grade which prevented them from becoming Fellows. (To become a Fellow one had to receive at least a B- in the course.)

As for the training course itself, ELS 200 had three stated objectives: 1) to give students an awareness of problems and patterns of immigration in the U.S. and an understanding of what it was like to be an immigrant in this country; 2) to provide an introduction to the theory and practice of second language acquisition, especially as they applied to learning English (pointing out specific features of English pronunciation, grammar, etc., that were particularly difficult for certain nonnative speakers, and explaining why); 3) to show students how to use this knowledge in small collaborative groups while studying the content of other courses, that is, having them define their role as future Fellows. During this last third of the course, Fellows currently working in the program would come to class and talk about their experiences and unexpected challenges. The last time the course was offered, when we had a large enough pool of active Fellows, students in the training course were paired with Fellows who were actually conducting sessions. As one of their "practical activities," each "Fellow in training" was to observe one of those sections for two weeks, then report back to the class on what they saw and learned.

Most of the students who took this course found it difficult. In their evaluations they said that the amount of reading was substantially heavier than most other courses, even advanced literature courses, and some of the texts, especially in the second phase of the course, devoted to language acquisition, they found excessively technical and scholarly and therefore hard to read, particularly for first year students. But most of them also said that the course had brought about a change in their world view, and thus in their lives, because it had brought them into contact with people and problems of which they'd had no knowledge previously.[17]

So it seems fair to say that even if nothing else resulted from the program (and it is true that as many as one fourth of the students who took the training course did not go on to participate as active Fellows, for a variety of reasons) something very positive had been accomplished. But as we always told the students at the end of the course, that was just the beginning.

ELS 201:

Four to five weeks before the end of the semester the students in the training seminar and all the other Fellows submitted a list of courses they were planning to take the following term. A masterlist of all these courses was then compiled (excluding those in which there were not likely to be any students in need of help with their English, such as a

senior seminar in German), and this list was distributed throughout campus. NNS students could consult that list and pre-enroll in any of these courses, knowing they would probably to able to enroll in accompanying section of ELS 201. As stated above, the Masterlist for fall, 1995, distributed the previous spring, consisted of 134 courses. At the beginning of the following semester, more courses would no doubt have been added, as some of the thirty-nine Fellows had not yet chosen all of their courses.

At the top of the Masterlist we always stated that "supplementary English language study sessions may be available for the following courses," for before opening those sections we had to receive permission from the instructors, which was the next step. In the first few days of the ensuing semester the Fellows were again polled about the courses they were taking, the apparent absence or presence of E-Ls in them, and whether or not they would feel confident about offering concurrent sections of 201 (Fellows were never forced to conduct sections of 201, encouraged, urged, cajoled perhaps, but never forced), and the Masterlist was revised accordingly. To each instructor on that list we sent a personal letter introducing the Fellow in their course and asking if they had any objection to this person offering a section of ELS 201 "for up to three nonnative-speaking classmates," based on the content of their course. (This letter and other documents mentioned in this section may be found in the Appendix.) In four semesters, sending out this letter to over 200 faculty members, we only received one negative response. The reason this professor gave for not wanting to participate in the program (hand written in a full page letter to the program director) was that he didn't need anyone else to help teach his course, thank you, (it was a large, introductory physics course), and that if an undergraduate did undertake to do this, the professor was sure that student would not "get it right," and would only mislead "the students he was tutoring."

The letter was interesting for two reasons. First, it was typical of a kind of response produced by other peer tutorial programs and which we had been warned to expect. Because programs like ours were often perceived as turning over responsibility for teaching to students (when in fact they were involving them as active participants in learning, rather than as vessels to be filled), some members of the institution were sure to see the program as a threat to their authority.[18] But the letter was also interesting because it was the only one of its kind we ever got. On the whole, faculty at URI were much more favorably disposed to the program that we had thought they would be.

The next step for the Fellows, and in some ways the most delicate phase of the program, for reasons stated above, was identifying E-Ls in their content courses, and then convincing them that they were English-learning students (and not just nonnative speakers), that they could benefit by continuing to learn English while studying the course

content, and that such a thing was in fact possible. They had to be convinced, contrary to deep-seeded impressions that might have been implanted in them years before in school, that they could still make progress in their English. Many NNS students remained doubtful, but we had three incitements for encouraging them to enroll in 201. The first was the unit of credit. Second, the fact confirmed repeatedly once the program was up and running, by E-L participants and course instructors, that enrolling in these sections increased their chances of passing and doing well in the content course. Third, the sad truth that more and more NNS students who had recently graduated from the University were now checking out groceries at a super market, rather than designing bridges or computer programs, because of their limited English.

To ensure that these sections remained truly collaborative and did not become mini courses taught by the Fellows, enrollment in each was limited to three. (In fact, only about 20% of the sections of 201 ever offered actually had the maximum enrollment. Another 20% had two students enrolled, but the majority had only one, which was in some ways ideal for both the Fellow and the English learner. In those few instances where more than three students wanted to enroll in one section, and they could not sort it out among themselves, the project director made the decision, based on seniority and need.) The first meeting between the Fellow and the E-L/s was to decide where and when they would continue to meet throughout the semester. Ordinarily those meetings were to take place twice a week and would last at least an hour. At this first meeting the E-Ls also filled out a questionnaire that would help the Fellow determine each E-L's needs and desires in studying English. The questionnaire also contained a brief contractual statement, to be signed by the E-Ls, which made it clear that they understood the purpose of those sessions and that they agreed to attend them regularly and do the extra language-related study that they would require. (Attendance at less than 80% of the sessions resulted either in not being awarded the extra unit of credit, or in having it recorded as a "fail.")

After each meeting with their E-Ls, throughout the semester, Fellows were required to fill out a brief "course report," summing up what went on in that session. As soon as they started coming in, these course reports became the lifeblood of the program. Originally intended to keep the project director and graduate assistant informed of the day-to-day progress of each section, so that they could monitor them and intervene if any problems arose, they also became instrumental in helping the Fellows themselves understand what it was they were doing and prepare for future sessions.

And problems did arise. E-L students would stop showing up. Fellows would stop sending in course reports. Personality conflicts would develop. Cultures would clash. A woman conducting a section of 201 for an older male student originally from

Southeast Asia was shocked speechless one day when he expressed his heartfelt opinion that it was perfectly natural and appropriate for a wife to be beaten by her husband from time to time. (Ironically, the E-L had been moved to express this view because of his sense of confidence in the Fellow.) Even more shocking to the Fellow was that the subject of the content course was the history of women's liberation.

One can easily imagine that as the program grew, so did the burden of the project director and the graduate assistant to keep it running smoothly. To alleviate this increasingly heavy administrative burden, two very important reforms were launched.

The first, thanks to a small grant from the URI Foundation, was the establishment of two computer networks, one for all the active Fellows, another for the Fellows training course. From then on, Fellows conducting sections could send in their course reports via e-mail (and they were strongly encouraged to do so), getting immediate replies when problems arose, or even before they arose. Common problems that could be discussed openly were posted on the ELF E.B.B and Fellows helped one another find solutions. Teaching the Fellows training course was also facilitated and enhanced by a computer network. For every text the students read in that course, they were required to write a short summary and critique. Now those summaries were posted on the network for everyone in the course to read, and if they wished, respond to. Other written work as well, reports on "practical activities" and other exercises, were also posted on the course bulletin board for everyone to share.

This in itself did not result in less work for the project director. During the spring semester I was actually spending as many as 5-6 hours a day in front of the computer, communicating with program participants via e-mail. It did mean though that this time spent was much less disperse, more densely concentrated, thus more effective. It also meant that I could continue to do much of what was required to run the program from my office at home---which led to the second Great Reform of Year 3.

One of the problems of this program, a flaw built in from the beginning and referred to above, was that the further some of the Fellows progressed towards their degrees the less occasion they had to practice the talents they had been acquiring, because there were fewer and fewer E-Ls in their courses. This was especially unfortunate because of the natural tendency of most of the Fellows to get better and better at what they did the more they did it, and to enjoy it more.[19] Another basic flaw was the ever-increasing amount of time required to monitor the sections of ELS 201, that were multiplying every semester. If, as originally planned, 40-50 Fellows were conducting sections of 201 for two of their courses, the project director would be receiving between 160 to 200 course reports every week. Setting up a computer network revealed that those sections that

received immediate feedback via e-mail were much more effective and progressed much more smoothly, hence the need to respond to each course report as it was received. Properly monitoring those sections also meant sitting in on each of them from time to time, especially at the beginning of the semester. Those sections were being held at all hours, all over, in sorority living rooms, hidden corners of the library, dormitory lounges, living rooms of private houses far from campus, . . . (Fellows were strongly advised not to hold sessions in their rooms). Keeping track of all of them, even for two people doing nothing but that, would have been physically impossible. But in addition to monitoring the sections of 201, there was the Fellows training course to teach (which changed every semester), more and more letters to be sent out to faculty, more and more students applying to the program, longer and longer payroll forms to be filled out every two weeks, purchase orders to be completed, announcements to be posted, masterlists compiled, E-L lists updated, . . .

There was a simple, one might even say organic solution to both problems. In the fall semester of 1995 three Fellows who had conducted sections of 201 in the past but had no E-Ls that term were hired to take over a number of administrative tasks: helping to set up the new computer network, taking over some of the accounting and paperwork, recruiting NNS students into the program and NS students as future Fellows, and occasionally helping monitor some of the sections of 201.

The idea proved so successful that it evolved into the concept of the Senior Fellow--someone who would not necessarily be conducting a section of 201 herself, but by virtue of past experience would be eminently qualified to help other, less experienced Fellows in conducting theirs. The following semester, spring 1995, seven senior Fellows worked with the project director in helping to monitor sections of 201. In some ways these senior Fellows were more effective monitors than the project director or graduate assistant because their presence was perceived as less intrusive, their input more in keeping with the cooperative spirit on which the program was based. Since I was now spending most of my time running the program from my office a home, via e-mail, I was able to turn over my office on campus to a staff of senior Fellows who came in at regular hours and were constantly on hand to answer queries over the phone, consult with Fellows and E-Ls who stopped by with questions and minor problems, and conduct their own sections of 201 (if they had any). One of these senior Fellows, an advanced pharmacy student who enjoyed doing clerical work and did it well, was able to take over the increasingly heavy burden of record keeping and accounting. Another, a major in Computer Engineering, took charge of maintaining the two computer networks and was available to conduct mini-workshops and help other Fellows, even the least computer-literate, to get on line. Finally, a Cambodian

student who had taken several sections of 201 with many different Fellows and was a fervent supporter of the program was also hired as a staff member who would provide liaison with NNS students on campus. This student's job was to recruit other E-Ls into the program and "talk it up" with campus ethnic groups such as the Asian Students Association and the Latin American Students Association.[20]

For fall semester 1995, on-campus management of the entire program was set to be taken over by a core staff of nine or ten Senior Fellows. In addition to continuing to fulfill the tasks described above, each would be in charge of 2-3 other Fellows, reading and responding to their course reports and monitoring their sections of 201, reporting directly, when there were problems they could not resolve, to the program director. Thus the responsibilities of the project director would be gradually taken over, in a natural process of evolution, by the Fellows themselves, and the ELF program would not only be genuinely student centered, it would also be student run.

It does not seem an exaggeration to say that the English Language Fellows Program in this last phase---students working together to solve the ESL problem day-to-day, course-by-course, individual-by-individual---would have set a stunning example for others grappling with this problem, and would even have become a landmark in American higher education. The President's decision on May 25 not to support the dissemination grant and the decision of the Dean of Arts and Sciences shortly therafter to slash the entire ELS program, replacing everyone with part-timers, effectively prevented that from taking place. It also firmly re-established the ESL problem at URI.

E. Evaluation: project results:

In three years, what did this program accomplish? When one considers that sections of ELS 201 were only offered for two of those years, once the two new courses had been put in place and the first group of Fellows trained, the accomplishments are remarkable. In spring semester of 1994, the average grade of NNS students in courses where they were working with Fellows was 2.92. This compares to an overall average in those courses, for native and nonnative speakers alike, of 2.34. Confirming our expectations that conducting sections of ELS 201 would have a beneficial effect on one's own grades, the average grade for Fellows in those same courses was 3.62. Both the grades of the Fellows and those of their NNS classmates in those courses were significantly higher than their overall GPA.

In the fall of 1994, the average grade of the 34 NNS students in courses for which they were taking concurrent sections of ELS 201 was 2.80. The overall class average in those same courses was 2.49. The average grade for Fellows in those same courses: 3.45.

Another goal of this project that can be judged qualititatively was increased retention of the NNS students on campus. As of the end of fall semester, 1994, 42 NNS students had participated in the program.[21] Of those 42, one had by then dropped out. The rest were still pursuing their studies at URI. These figures give the program a retention rate of 97.6%. The average, overall retention rate at the University of Rhode Island is 54%. Based on figures supplied by the Public Information Division of the Office of Educational Research, the estimated rate of retention of linguistic minorities nationally is between 30 and 35%!

One normally tends to give more weight to the hard data than to more subjective feedback. But because the ESL problem at its origins is a problem of attitude, I think it is important finally to focus on the latter.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from NS students in the training course, and from E-L students during the first year sections of 201 were offered, has already been documented in separate reports by my on-site evaluator, Glenn Erickson, Director of the Instructional Development Program at URI. Dr. Erickson's reports were included in the appendix of my annual reports for Year 1 and 2 and were instrumental in my efforts to make adjustments in the program as it took shape. The fact that the Fellows training course had a profound and lasting effect on the NS students who took it, even if they did not go on to become active in the program, is discussed in an article to be published in the next issue of College ESL, as is the "faculty development" component of the program. (This article is included in the Appendix.) What follows is a brief summary of subjective data received in the third year of the program, from both the Fellows and their E-L classmates, in the form of evaluative questionnaires handed out at the end of each semester.

Of the 23 Fellows who responded, 7 said they did "much better" in the content courses as a result of conducting concurrent sections of 201, 9 said they did "better," 7 said they probably would have done "about the same," that is, received the same grade. These last 7 all said however that preparing for the sections had a beneficial effect on their study habits because it prevented them from procrastinating, helped them formulate ideas about papers and tests, forced them to take better notes, etc. In discussing what they liked most about the program, the great majority spoke of the close relationships that developed between them and their E-L classmates, whom they would never have gotten to know otherwise, and of the "good feeling" that comes from being a Fellow, and which therefore added another dimension to the usual undergraduate experience.

"Participating in the program makes you feel like you're doing something special."

"The personal contact involved with being a Fellow has made the experience valuable. This program enables people to come together and share their ideas. I have made a friend and an excellent study partner this year. . ."

"Participation in this program has impacted my adacemic performance the most. Secondly, this program has made me a little more outgoing, as the Fellow must earn the trust of the E-L. To do this, one must pay attention to people and be aware of them. . ."

"I have realized that ESL is not remedial at all. . . That it involves learning a new way to think along with a new language, that it involves an immense amount of courage, having an open mind and a strong hold on your own values."

"I learned how to LISTEN."

"I felt it was a great learning experience. It has taught me a lot about teaching and understanding."

"Nice feeling to help E-Ls and make friends with them. My grades were better because of the study sessions. The E-Ls' grades were better also. This showed me that the program was working. I learned a lot about the different cultures and customs outside of the U.S., the E-Ls learned a lot more about the U.S. and the language. Everyone had fun while learning."

"I have learned so much about the E-Ls and now they are my friends. We will be able to keep in touch with each other, even though we may not have a class together anymore. . . I've learned that being a fellow goes beyond the classroom, . . ."

Of the 36 E-Ls who handed in questionnaires, 2 said they would have done "about the same" in the content courses, 20 said they did "better," 14 "much better." As for the effect they felt the sessions had had on their English language skills, 2 said their English had stayed "about the same," 14 that it had gotten "a little better," and 20 said that because of that 1-unit study section their English had gotten "much better." Asked if they intended to participate in the program again in the future, 32 said they did (several adding "absolutely!") and 4 said they did not---3 because they were living off campus and did not have the extra time, 1 because she was graduating. All 36 respondants said they would recommend the program strongly to their NNS friends. For them, as for the Fellows, an important side benefit of the program was the personal dimension, and the feeling that they were not alone. Clearly, it was also changing the way they saw themselves.

"[The program] tells you that there are people out there to help you, you're not alone. It takes me a long time to read, and this helps me to know I'm not dumb, or illiterate."

"I like studying with F. She so helpful, so wonderful person. . ."

"The program is able to most important thing, build the confidence in us. We have low confidence, low self esteem. . ."

"I never like to have other read my writing because I feel embarrass, but I've learned from this and made me realize that this class was helpful."

"It's good because I can ask S. anything I want, without being afraid. It helps to know someone."

"I could never do this class without this work together."

In preparing the proposal for the dissemination grant, some of the faculty who had had firsthand experience with the program were asked to write letters of support. I will end this section by quoting from those letters (even though I know I've gone well beyond my 20-page limit!) because they show the extent to which the program had taken hold, and begun to have a positive effect, in two short years.

"I am an academic counselor for a special admission and retention program for students projected to be at risk at the university. . . My students were nurtured and encouraged by the individual outreach and attention. They were helped immensely by the specific content work done with Fellows and felt the language work was building proficiency and confidence. Many of my students have felt isolated and marginalized in the classroom, . . . and this program opened doors and built skills like no other I've seen. . . I have run tutoring programs for over twenty years. I have worked with at risk populations in higher education for over twenty years. This Fellows program combines the best elements of content work and language acquisition."

"Students who are non-native speakers of English [at URI] have benefited enormously from the Fellows Program. In my own [philosophy] classes this past term I witnessed the development of academic skills and confidence in a young Laotion woman who possessed a strong intellect but an uncertain mastery of English, and the breathtaking achievements of a Vietnamese-American student who eventually surpassed her Fellow's performance on an exam! . . . Prior to the inception of [the ELF program] I sadly watched motivated NNS students drift behind or become discouraged in some of my courses; despite my most earnest efforts, I could not attend fully to their individual language needs. The Fellows Program has rectified this situation . . ."

"I am a 53 year old white male tenured full professor with 27 years experience teaching in the English Department at URI. . . The young Vietnamese woman in my lower-division [literature] course this spring had a stomg work ethic but a heavy schedule of classes and work. Her English Language Fellow kept her focused and working efficiently . . . The Vietnamese student earned a B+ in the course; the Fellow earned an A; I felt great satisfaction in seeing both succeed in a challenging course. But the benefits were more far reaching than reflected in these superior grades. . . The Fellow freed me from the frustration of trying to work with the non-native speaker on tasks and in ways that I had no preparation for. . ."

"In the past two semesters, I have been pleased to have [Fellows] working with their nonnative speaking classmates in my introductory physical anthropology courses. . . Predictably, the difficulties are compounded for nonnative speakers,with the result that many do not make grades commensurate with their intelligence or their overall academic record. The ELF Program has worked wonderfully to eliminate the disadvantages experienced by nonnative speakers and allow them to maximize both learning and grades."

E. Summary and Conclusions:

In conclusion, I can say with confidence (and in all modesty) that the English Language Fellows program was a great idea and FIPSE was right to support it. I would also like to give colleagues interested in setting up similar programs at their own institutions a few words of advice.

1) Getting such a program up and running is a full-time job. In addition to a project director, staff for a similar-sized program should include some sort of research or teaching assistant, and secretarial support to help process the increasingly heavy weight of paperwork.

2) The study sections conducted by the specially-trained native speakers must be credit bearing, and that credit must count towards graduation. There are many strong arguments to support this and these arguments should be clearly understood by the administration before the groundwork is laid.

3) Once the program is running, communication is the key to success---communication between the director and the Fellows, between the Fellows and the content faculty, and among the Fellows, the director, and all participating NNS students. For this reason, weekly or bi-monthly meetings should be a built-in feature. Half or full-day workshops are also a good idea, and attendance at the meetings and workshops should be obligatory. If possible, direct communication among all participants should also be maintained through a computer network, and learning how to use that network and how to send and receive messages by e-mail should be one of the requirements of passing the training course.

4) In order for such a project to succeed and prosper it must have, *a priori*, the unqualified, enthusiastic support of the administration, and that support must be in writing.

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[1] When I learned about this proposal to substitute credit for cash, I said that it raised serious questions, and that if adopted, it would subvert the spirit on which the program was based. Because this proposal was adopted (over my strong objections) and because other people interested in establishing similar programs have asked me what I thought about the idea, I will briefly summarize some of those questions here.

1) Much of the work that the Fellows do is administrative in nature---making copies, filling out course reports, looking through texts for appropriate exercises in grammar, pronunciation, etc. A lot of it is also repetitive---going back over the same pronunciation problem again and again throughout the semester until the NNS student begins to get it right, pointing out the same error in articles or verb tense in weekly writing assignments, etc. Wouldn't giving credit for this type of activity run the risk of devaluing academic credit at the institution, and of alienating other faculty concerned about maintaining academic standards? 2) My own experience with independent study projects is that they require a lot of extra work and that faculty are wise not to take them on too readily, certainly not more than one in any given semester. Would this non-tenure-track part-timer, in addition to everything else she would have to do to keep the program running, also be expected to monitor 35-50 independent study projects every semester, and make sure that they were academically sound? 3) Many of the Fellows, students in Engineering, Pharmacy, or Education, are already taking the maximum allowable number of credits every semester. At URI they are allowed to add to that load, but they must pay for it. So instead of being paid for conducting those sessions, were some of the Fellows, and some of the most dedicated ones, now going to have to pay for that privilege? 4) Giving people something you can manufacture in unlimited quantities, in exchange for their doing something for you, indicates either that you don't take very seriously what they are doing, or that if you do, you hope they do not realize that what you are "paying" them is worthless. In either case the ploy is pretty cynical, isn't it?

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[2] See Blakely, The English Language Fellows Program, College ESL, forthcoming.

[3] Ultimately this student did enroll in the 1-unit study section, and she and the professor both agreed afterwards that if she had not done so, she would not have done nearly so well in the content course. This student, a senior who was hoping to become a teacher, went on to enroll in another section of 201 the following semester, and ended up a firm supporter of the program.

[4] Providence Journal-Bulletin (March 18, 1994).

[6] Numbers and Needs, Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities in the United States, Vol. 5, no. 4 (July 1995), Box G1H/B, Washington D.C. 20016.

[7] By contrast, programs in "français langue étrangère" in France are considered a vital link in the educational network and their staff are treated the same as other colleagues.

[8] Quote from Providence Journal, . . .

[9] The Southeast Asians in Rhode Island, R.I. Historical Society, Providence, 1979.

[10] See article written for Providence Journal, in Appendix.

[11] College ESL.

[12] This is a decision I now regret. At the time, the two other options were for the courses, and the entire ESL program, to be an autonomous unit, answerable to the Provost, or to be housed in the Department of Foreign Languages. In hindsight, I think it would have been better for the program, and more appropriate all around, to have chosen the latter option. As an autonomous entity, this program would not have the support of an established structure, and would be vulnerable when money got tight. In the English Department, as it turned out, it also lacked support because hardly anybody understood what it was all about, or, frankly, cared. Faculty in the English Dept. were primarily interested in literature or in writing. Colleagues in Foreign Languages, on the other hand, understood it implicitly , and provided valuable input throughout the life of the program.

[13] As I said in my annual report for Year 1 (1992-93), "One of the major obstacles ESL teachers face every day is the widespread perception that their profession is marginal to mainstream academics, and I am convinced that the term 'second' helps maintain this image of marginality in people's minds. It is also, in many cases, a misnomer. Many people learning English are fluent in other languages as well, and for others, English is the first language in which they have achieved a degree of literacy. In the interests of de-marginalizing the profession, 'English as a Foreign Language' is hardly better, and at any rate it is the title generally used nowadays to designate teaching English in countries where another language is dominant. And so I decided that if I were going to make a case for improving the situation of NNS students on campus, . . . I had better dump the terms 'second' and 'foreign.'"

[14] Annual Report, Year 1.

[15] Some have also suggested Vygotsky's "more capable peer," but in terms of leveling the terrain between the NS and the NNS participants, that would put us back at square one, and be even more cumbersome than "peer tutor." One can imagine a student jumping up from his table in the cafeteria and saying, "I've got an appointment with my more capable peer."

[16] Benesch, Blakely, TESOL report.

[17] An example of the depth and kind of change the course brought about can be found in the article on the program soon to be published in College ESL.

[18] In Collaborative Learning, (Johns Hopkins, 1993) Kenneth Bruffee has a lot to say about peer tutors as agents of subversion.

[19] This was not true across the board. A few of the Fellows did burn out after a couple of semesters, or decide to take a semester's leave of absence---which was the case of the Fellow in the Women's Studies course, referred to above.

[20] One might worry that this increased activity would prove to be too costly. But in fact all of this was done while staying well within the limits of our budget. In the third year $30,000 had been allotted for Fellows' salaries, but in fact we ended up spending only two-thirds of that amount. Moreover, providing the same type of English language support to the same number of students through more traditional means---full or even part-time faculty---would have cost much more.

[21] Although the program serves both "immigrant" and "international" nonnative speakers, this number includes only immigrant students who plan to remain in the U.S., and it does not count more than once those students who have taken multiple sections of ELS 201. Hence the number might seem lower than one would would expect.

Appendix A

Letter to FIPSE

So what went wrong? Why, in May 1995, did the President of URI renege on the promise he made to Chip Storey the previous October, during Chip's site visit to the campus, that the English Language Fellows Program would continue to be supported at its current level?

I understand FIPSE's reluctance to become involved with or even to hear about politics at institutions it supports. At yet, to explain clearly what took place at URI, there is no way I can not talk about politics, for the decision not to support the dissemination grant and to cut back ESL to prehistoric levels was, I am convinced, purely political. I might be wrong, but during the three months I have been putting off writing this report, certain elements have come into focus and I think I see the whole picture more clearly. Furthermore, as sorry as I am to say it, this is yet another dimension of the ESL problem, at URI as elsewhere.

In trying to articulate the ramifications of that problem, I mentioned the marginal status of ESL at most institutions. It is an issue of which I am acutely aware, because at URI the status of ESL has always been a classic case of marginality. The first two ESL courses at the University, WRT 112 and 122, were developed and taught by a woman in the English Department who had been granted tenure but had never completed her PhD. As I said in my report, these courses were originally designed for international students. As this population shifted to include more and more immigrants, this woman began to lose interest in these courses. As she herself told me, she actually resented the presence of immigrants in the courses because they were not as well educated, not as well disciplined, as the international students. In 1984 I was hired to help teach these courses on a part-time basis, but was soon hired full-time to teach all of them. When this woman took early retirement six years later I became the ad hoc director of the ESL program at URI, such as it was.

I want to stress "ad hoc." Since before this person retired, one of the questions that came up repeatedly at English Department meetings was how to "reconvert" the position that would be vacated by her departure. Very few people in the Department, at most 3 out of 35-40, would have seriously entertained a request for a tenure-track FTE in ESL. There was no need. ESL was "covered" by an ad hoc lecturer. And besides, what role did ESL have in an English Department? There were those who believed it had no role whatsoever, and that students who could not speak and write English fluently did not belong at the University.

When ESL began to become more visible, because of rising numbers of NNS students and a campaign by the Providence Journal to focus attention on them, that attitude began to change, but never to the extent of anyone taking the initiative to create a full-time, tenure track position in ESL, thereby legitimizing it and accepting it as a responsibility of the University. The question was, whose responsibility was it? People in the English Department said it was up to the Provost to create and fund a new position. The Provost said it was up to the English Department to choose its priorities, and if it wanted an FTE in ESL, to take it out of funds already allotted. People in the department kept asking me what the administration was going to do, people in the administration kept asking me what the department was going to do. It was like watching a game of ping pong, from inside the ball.

Naively, I thought the FIPSE grant would change all that. But it did not. And this is where it becomes impossible not to talk about politics.

When it became likely that the project I had proposed was going to be funded, I sent a number of memos to my dean, asking for some assurance that "if the project is as successful as I think it promises to be, I will, after the three years, be given a tenured, or at least a tenurable position." Although I received words of encouragement from the associate dean, I never received a written answer to that memo from the dean himself. When it came time to decide whether or not to go ahead with the project without a firm commitment, I

went ahead, hoping the commitment would be forthcoming, as I had been led to believe. As I now see it, the problem was that I had no advocate, either in the English Department or in the administration, no one to stand beside me and force such a commitment to be made, and this is because ESL had no real home.

This fundamental lack of support when it was most needed became apparent two more times during the course of the project. The first was in the fall semester of the first year, when the dean made it known through my chair that he was expecting me to teach the two ESL courses (WRT 112 & 122) in addition to directing the new program. When I pointed out to my chair that the contract with FIPSE obligated me to devote full time developing the project, he sympathized with me and expressed his outrage at the dean's position, but he never went to the dean himself. It was up to me to go to the Associate Dean and work out some sort of compromise.

And a compromise was eventually found. One of the courses was cancelled and I co-taught the other with my graduate assistant. But I am sure at that time I went down in the dean's book as a troublemaker, and as someone who stood alone.

Two years later, at the beginning of the crucial third year of the program, a similar event occurred, but this was much more significant and egregious. Relating it now, one and a half years later, still makes my palms sweat and my heart beat faster, but relate it I must, because it helps explain what happened the following May.

My grant provided funds for a graduate assistant throughout the 3-year period. At the end of the second year the person who had been my assistant until then finished her M.A. (writing her thesis on the project), and decided not to go on for her PhD. There was money in the English Department to hire part-timers to teach the three new ELS courses the following year. I suggested combining my funds in the grant with the department's funds, to create a full-time lectureship in ESL---someone who would teach the three courses and for the fourth, would take over the role as my assistant in the ELF program. The new chair of the department liked the idea, we got the nod from FIPSE, and it was approved by the dean in April. The position was not approved by the Affirmative Action Officer on campus until mid July---too late for a national search, but not too late for fifty candidates to send in applications for this one-year, non-renewable lectureship. Because this was an official position, it had to go through the selections committee of the English Department. Since I was not tenured, nor on a tenure track, I was not allowed to be a member of that committee. I was, however, allowed to sit in on deliberations in an advisory capacity. (Members of the committee assured me beforehand that since I had created the position and would be paying for half of it, and was in fact the only ESL specialist in the department, they would listen carefully to my advice and in any case defer to my judgement.)

The committee chose three finalists for the position, one of whom was the woman who had been my graduate assistant for the first two years. A week later this candidate was eliminated a priori by the Affirmative Action Officer. The other two candidates traveled to URI to be interviewed by the committee in the last week of August, <u>one week before classes were to begin</u>. Of the two candidates, I found one to be extremely well qualified, the other to be extremely unqualified, mainly because as a nonnative speaker herself, she had difficulty speaking and understanding English. The selections committee voted unanimously to hire this second candidate. They reasoned that since this person was of Oriental descent, and therefore a minority, they could not do otherwise. I do not think they even listened to the reasons I gave for her being less qualified than the first candidate.

That afternoon, when I discovered what appeared to be a misrepresentation in the dossier of the candidate that had been chosen by the committee, I appealed their recommendation to my chair and to the associate dean. That evening I received a call at home from the dean. He informed me that in researching the dossiers of the two candidates I had "broken a federal law." This was the Thursday before Labor Day. Classes were to begin the following Wednesday. The dean ordered me not to talk to anyone else about this matter and to appear in his office the following Tuesday.

At that meeting, with the two associate deans in attendance, I told the dean that I would acquiesce in his decision to accept the recommendation of the selections committee, but that in my opinion it would be a shameful waste of FIPSE money, because the person would not be able to do what the job required. Within a few weeks it became obvious that I had been right.

In hindsight, I am fairly sure President Carothers wanted to support the dissemination grant and to maintain funding for the ELF program. But I know that before making the decision not to do so he had a meeting with the Provost and the Dean, and at that meeting I am quite sure the Dean advised him to withdraw his support.

Last summer, after learning that my own position was going to terminated and that I was to be replaced by a part-timer, I had lunch with someone in the administration at URI who had always been a friend and supporter. This person was also a Dickens scholar. The way he saw it, ESL at URI was a poor orphan out of a Dickens novel. "You may be more deserving, more capable and qualified than other people who arrived after you and went on to get promoted, but because ESL is an orphan you had no one to stand up for you, and in the end when there was not enough money to buy food for everyone, it was your plate that was removed from the table."

I think he was right, and unfortunately I think that what he said holds true for a lot of other people besides myself.

When I received the FIPSE grant, John Grandin expressed amazement that it had been awarded to a non-tenure track lecturer. I hope this will not cause you to hesitate before awarding other grants to NTTs. NTT faculty are out in the trenches, working directly with students, and they come up with a lot of good, creative ideas. They have to, in order to survive. I do think it would be good though in the future, when NTT faculty are going to become project directors, that FIPSE receive firm assurance from the institution, in writing, that the people as well as the program will be allowed to survive beyond the first three years.

You said to be candid. I hope I haven't been too candid.

Richard Blakely

English is the program's focus but the learning is global

As an English Language Fellow Murray Reed (above), a junior, tutors other students whose primary language is not English who are enrolled in the same classes that he is. Among Reed's English learning students are Chean Men (top right) from Cambodia and Li Lei (top left) from China. Men and Lei are both freshmen.

Chean, Li, Ramuna, and Murray. Born in different parts of the world, pursuing different fields of study. Yet the four are classmates, study partners, and friends, thanks to the innovative English Language Fellows Program here at the University of Rhode Island.

Begun in the fall of 1992 under the direction of Richard Blakely, the program teams outstanding English-speaking undergraduate students with non-native undergrads for whom English may be a second, third, or even fourth language.

Here's how the program works. To become an English Language Fellow, Murray Reed, a junior from Deep River, Conn., had to take a three-credit training course in the theory and practice of teaching English and collaborative learning. From that point on, in any other course Murray and the other Fellows take at the University, they will be able to provide content-based English language instruction to English learning students who happen to be taking the same course. For their participation in the study group, the non-native speaking students receive one credit.

This semester Murray was teamed with three freshmen: Chean Men from Cambodia, Li Lei from China, and Ramuna Gould from Liberia. The four are enrolled in a nutrition class. Two times a week, they meet in Taft Hall for an hour and go over the class work. Recently, they could be found discussing calcium deficiency and what the professor meant when he said "I digress."

Chean recently became a U.S. citizen. His incredible journey from Cambodia to the U.S. involved refugee camps, imprisonment, walking across Malaysia, and swimming to Singapore. Unlike many non-native speaking students who pursue math and sciences because they aren't language intensive, Chean hopes to pursue a career in psychology.

On the other hand, his classmate Li prefers the universality of math. Soft-spoken Li, who wants to pursue an accounting degree, says she finds writing English the most difficult task.

For Ramuna, English actually is her first language, but the future nurse says American listeners seem to have difficulty understanding her Liberian accent. Becoming an English Fellow was a natural for Murray, who majors in German and Russian language studies and hopes to teach. "I'm particularly interested in how people learn language," he says.

Not all Fellows are language majors. In fact, they come from a variety of disciplines.

The Fellows Program is funded by a $186,000 grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) and a matching grant from the University. FIPSE grants are highly competitive and awarded for programs that can serve as national models.

Blakely, an assistant professor of English, expects the Fellows program at URI to expand and grow. There are 11 active Fellows this semester, and 13 more are being trained. Next year Blakely predicts there will be between 50 and 100 content courses with supplementary one credit sections led by Fellows.

"Gaining fluency in a foreign language takes a long time—according to recent research, as many as seven or eight years of constant effort. So instead of mainstreaming students out of ESL as soon as they have learned to tread water (often leaving them to drown as soon as they round the next bend in the river) we should make the English language study a central current of the mainstream for as long as they need it," Blakely wrote in a commentary to *The Providence Journal*.

Recently articles in that newspaper have suggested that the University was denying entrance to a growing number of students because they speak a native language other than English. Unfortunately, the articles failed to point out this program, which is attracting attention from other universities across the country.

To gauge the success of any program, it's important to see how people involved in it respond. If you can judge achievement from the smiles and easy-going chatter of the study groups, this program earns five stars.

Asked what's the best part of the program, Chean didn't hesitate. "Getting to know him," the Cambodian says of Murray.

Ramuna agrees. "He really does a good job," she says patting the English Language Fellow on the back.

Murray points out that there is an exchange across the table. "We really have learned about each other and our cultures." ◆

By Jan Sawyer

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ESL is *not* 'remedial' English

RICHARD BLAKELY

THE JOURNAL IS RIGHT to focus attention on the growing numbers of high school students in Rhode Island who are denied access to Rhode Island College or the University of Rhode Island because they speak a native language other than English. It would be wrong, however, to assume that this is strictly a problem of higher education, or strictly its fault. The root of the problem lies in the way these students are perceived and treated long before they apply to college. If we really want to solve it we must correct the misperceptions and change the policies that issue from them.

In Rhode Island, as everywhere else in this country, most non-native speaking children are "mainstreamed" out of English language classes well before they have attained the necessary skills to perform successfully in school. The assumption (blessed by theories that are now being questioned) is that they will pick these skills up along the way. Unfortunately, they don't. A ninth grader with "third-grade English" who is told in her college-prep English class to read *Macbeth* and write a paper on it simply panics. If she does manage to write a paper (often with a lot of help from her friends) it is liable to be returned to her with one of two opposite, and to her equally mystifying, reactions.

Either it will come back covered and crisscrossed with angry "corrections" and a note saying she is in the wrong class, or there will be no marks on it whatsoever, save for a few lines at the bottom saying she has good ideas and expresses them well, considering.

On papers students have shown to me I have seen both extremes. Those who get enough of the first usually give up hope of ever going to college, or even of completing school. Those who receive the second and manage to get into college by virtue of good grades and exemplary behavior arrive at the university hoping they'll be able to hide their limited English for the next four years as well as they hid it in the past. And many do.

To reverse this trend we have to recognize two simple facts:

- For non-native speakers in this country, English is a foreign language.
- Gaining fluency in a foreign language takes a long time — according to recent research, as many as seven or eight years of constant effort. So instead of mainstreaming students out of ESL as soon as they have learned to tread water (often leaving them to drown as soon as they round the next bend in the river) we should make English language study a central current of that mainstream, for as long as they need it. And that study should include the same elements as effective foreign language courses: practice in reading, speaking, listening and writing, activities to expand and use new vocabulary, and yes, grammar.

For many mainstream English teachers, and many ESL teachers as well, grammar has become a dirty word. When dealing with native speakers of English, there are good reasons for this. In order to get his thoughts on paper, a native speaker doesn't need to know the difference between a gerund and a participle. But for the non-native speaker of English, at least at the earlier stages of learning the language, knowledge of grammar is one more useful tool that she can use in gaining fluency. In fact, without it, the English language learner is at a loss, severely disadvantaged in comparison with her native-speaking classmates. Imagine being forced to write a paper on Molière, in French, and not knowing how to conjugate a verb, or even to locate the verb in a sentence.

When they first arrive at the University, more and more of our non-native speakers cannot do just that: locate a verb in a simple sentence; explain the difference between a noun and a verb; say whether "a" or "the" should come before a noun, or whether it needs any article. When we point out to them that an "s" is added to the end of a verb in the present tense, third person singular (I write, you write, but she writes), they are amazed. No one ever told them that before.

I am not saying these students do not belong at the university. They do, and for those who manage to get in, despite the odds, and to remain, we offer a comprehensive program of English language courses, for credit, that will help them gain lost time and do their studies. They would be much better off, however, if their English language training before they got here had been deeper and more sustained. By the time they arrive at the university many of their non-standard or "faulty" patterns in speaking and writing have been "fossilized," set and reinforced by years of usage, because they were never corrected, or not corrected enough. Breaking these habits and learning new ones at 20 is much harder than it would have been at nine or ten.

No wonder students who should be taking these classes are reluctant to do so, and if they have a choice, choose not to. These courses are hard. Learning a new language takes time and patience and hard work. But there is another reason students avoid taking ESL, even if they need it badly, and this reason can be traced to another misconception, the most pernicious and widespread of all. To correct it, one more fact needs to be faced and accepted.

If one agrees that learning English for a Cambodian, for example, is just as difficult as learning Cambodian would be for a native speaker of English, that fact becomes the next logical deduction, as obvious as it is irrefutable. And yet, judging from comments by Americo Petrocelli, even the state commissioner of higher education has not yet grasped this simple truth, even though members of his own Interinstitutional Committee on ESL have been repeating it since it was formed. Obviously it needs to be repeated again: *ESL is not remedial!*

If, through no fault of his own, the commissioner found himself airlifted into a province in the middle of China, and forced to find menial work and send his kids to school, would learning Chinese be remedial for him and his family?

When administrators and teachers call ESL remedial, they relegate this subject to a secondary status, driving it underground, so to speak, and making non-native-speaking students ashamed to take it, and resentful if it is forced upon them. This is especially deplorable when one understands that it is only through perfecting their English that such students will ever be able to realize their potential in this society. But instead of learning to recognize their weaknesses in English at an early age, learning to see their own mistakes and to correct them in the future, the majority end up hiding those mistakes and weaknesses from their teachers, their classmates, and eventually themselves.

Imagine how they feel when they graduate from college and discover that they can't get jobs for which they have been trained because they cannot write a comprehensible letter of application or perform successfully in an interview.

For this is the final outcome of this problem: not disappointment at not getting into the college of their choice, but rage at not being able to take on a meaningful role in society once they are out. Sadly for most, that rage must remain mute. They are unable to express it.

Richard Blakely is director of the English Language Program at URI.

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Appendix B

Documents for ESL 200

English Language Fellows Program Training Course
ELS 200; Fall Semester, 1994
Monday & Wednesday 3-4:15
Independence 202

Syllabus

1. A preliminary survey through the telescope---WHO, WHAT and HOW:

This course is designed to sensitize you to the communication problems of growing numbers of your classmates at URI---those who speak another native language besides English. The objective of the course is to give you the skills and knowledge you will need, once you are active in the program, to help them continue to improve their English at the University---reading textbooks, listening to lectures, giving oral presentations and writing exams and papers---while studying the content of other courses that you will both be taking together.

The course will take place in three stages. Stage I, WHO, will focus on the people this program is designed to serve, namely your classmates mentioned above whose lack of English proficiency threatens their success at the University and beyond. Throughout the country, this growing population of students is referred to by a number of acronyms: NNS (non-native speakers) LEP (limited English proficient) PEP (potentially English proficient), but the most common term perhaps is simply ESL students (English as a Second Language). In this course we will refer to these people as English learners, or English-learning (EL) students, and the subject they are studying, with the help of our program, is not English as a Second or Foreign Language, but simply, English Language. (Hence the designation of this and other related courses as ELS---English Language Studies). In this first stage of the semester we will raise and try to answer a number of questions about the EL students on campus: Who are they? Why are they here? Where do they come from? What are their current needs and where do they go from here? As we get deeper into this phase of the course we will also try to look back at our own culture, from a distance, to see it through the eyes of someone who grew up speaking another language and for whom many American customs and common thought patterns which we take for granted may seem strange indeed.

Stage II, WHAT, will be an exploration of the field of language learning. What are some of the current theories of 2nd language (L2) acquisition? What are the four traditional language skills and how do we use them every day to succeed in an academic environment?

Stage III, HOW, will focus on the practical implementation of this knowledge. How can you take what you have learned so far (and will continue to learn throughout your years in the Program) and apply it to the day-to-day tasks of an English Language Fellow, organizing and conducting supplementary study sessions so that English-learning classmates can continue to improve their English while studying the content of other courses?

2. Texts:
(Available at R.I. Book Co., or URI Bookstore. Note that Anatomy of English will be given to you on the 1st day of class.)

Benesch: ESL in America
Butler: A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain
Celce-Murcia: Teaching English as a 2nd or Foreign Language
Otteson: L.A. Stories
Sedley: Anatomy of English
Storti: Cross-Cultural Dialogues.

You will also be doing selected readings from the Course Booklet for ELS 200, which you may pick up, without charge, at Copy Right, in the Union.

3. Instructor:

Richard Blakely; Office: Ind. 169; phone: O: 792-4686; H: 789-0832
Office hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:00 and Wed. 9:30-11 & 1:00-3:00

4. Written requirements:

A. Reading summaries.

B. Reports on "Practical Activities," to be assigned throughout the semester. These reports will be typed, double-spaced, and will vary in length from 3 to 15 pages. They will be assigned in the following order:

1. Interviewing an English learner.
2. Listening to academic discourse.
3. Analyzing a text and preparing pre-, while-, and post-reading exercises.
4. Helping an EL student prepare an oral presentation.
5. Helping an EL student write a paper.

C. A final project, due Friday, December 23, at 11 a.m. This will be a 12-15 page paper describing and analyzing the results of your last Practical Activity, "Helping an EL student write a paper."

5. Schedule of readings and activities:

Note that the texts are referred to by the name of the author, and that BK refers to the course booklet. Note also that the chapters and articles cited below are to be discussed on the day they are listed. For example, the first 4 stories by Butler (pp. 1-57) should be read by Monday, Sept. 19, and will be discussed on that day. Reading summaries will not be required for Sedley, and for those texts marked with an asterisk (*) summaries are required only for the entire chapter, not for individual articles or essays.

Stage I - WHO

Mon. 9/12: Announcements, introductions, course overview.

Wed. 9/14: Sedley, Chapter 1.
Begin Practical Activity I: "Interviewing an English Language Learner"

Mon. 9/19: Butler, 1-57
Otteson, Introduction + ch. 1*

Wed. 9/21: Sedley, Chapter 2
Butler, 59-93
Otteson, ch 2* & 3*
Quiz on Sedley, chapters 1 & 2.

Mon. 9/26: Butler, 95-135
Otteson, ch 5* & 6*

Wed. 9/28: Butler, 137-154
Otteson, ch 7* & 8*
Sedley, ch. 3.

Mon. 10/3: Butler, 155-end
BK, section I-B* (Refugees and Immigrants in R.I.)

Wed. 10/5: Benesch, Part I
BK, ESL in Secondary Ed.
Storti, ch 1* & 2*
Sedley, ch 4
Quiz in Sedley, chapters 3 & 4.

Mon. 10/10: Columbus Day, no class, but read:
Benesch, Part II

Wed. 10/12: Benesch, Part III
BK, Context, Barriers, Mother Tongue (end of sec. I-C)
Storti, ch 3* and 5*
Sedley, ch 5.
Assignment for Practical 1 is due.

Sat. 10/15: Luncheon and half-day Fall Workshop at Alton Jones

Stage II - WHAT

(During this phase of the course, readings will be from Teaching English as a 2nd or Foreign Language (Celce-Murcia), from the course booklet, and from other materials to be handed out in class.)

Mon. 10/17: Celce, Language Teaching Approaches . . . (3-10) **Skim.**
Teaching Language Through Content (315-317 only).
English Instruction for Linguistic Minority . . . (372-384)
Begin Practical Activity #2: Taping a Lecture.

Listening:

Wed. 10/19: Celce: Listening Comprehension in . . . (81-90 only)
A Synthesis of Methods for . . . (106-111 only)
Sedley, ch. 6
Quiz on Sedley, 5&6.

Mon. 10/24: BK: Listening Comprehension: Approach . . . (114-124)
Hand in Results of Practical Activity #2.

Speaking:

Wed. 10/26: Celce: Teaching Pronunciation. (136-153)
Sedley, ch 9
Begin Practical Activity 3: Helping an EL Lrnr . . .

Mon. 10/31 Celce: Teaching Speech Act Behavior . . . (154-166)

Reading:

Wed. 11/2: Celce: Academic Reading and the . . . (195-231)
Sedley, ch. 7
Quiz on Sedley, 9 &7.

Mon. 11/7: BK: Schema Theory and ESL Reading . . . (125-134)

Writing:

Wed. 11/9: Celce: Teaching Writing in the ESL Context . . . (235-262)
Sedley, ch 10

Mon. 11/14: Celce: Grammar in Writing (264-275)

Grammar & Vocabulary:

Wed. 11/16: Celce: Teaching Grammar (279-294)
Sedley, ch. 11
Quiz on Sedley 10 & 11

Mon. 11/21: Introduction to English Learner's Dictionary (distributed in class)

Wed. 11/23: Celce: Vocabulary Learning and Teaching (296-309)
Sedley, ch 8

Stage III - HOW

(Except for the chapters in Grammar Troublespots, all the readings will be from the Course Booklet.)

Mon. 11/28: Introduction to Grammar Troublespots (distributed in class).
Review Ch. 1, 5, 6

Wed. 11/30: Troublespots 9, 10, 11
Preparing for academic essays (Bklt. pp. 176-180)
Sedley, ch 12
Quiz on Sedley 8 & 12

Mon. 12/5: Troublespots 7, 14
How students learn (pp. 155-157)
Cooperative lrng in dyads (pp. 159-163)

Wed. 12/17: Troublespots 15, 16
Transfer from individual to . . . (PP. 164-168)
Sedley, ch 13.

Mon. 12/12: Troublespots 17, 18
The SQ3R study system (169-175)
Preview-view-review (181)

Wed. 12/14: Troublespots 19,20
Peer Tutoring, a conceptual background (135-154)
Sedley, ch 14
Quiz on Sedley, 13 & 14.

ELS 200 - English Language Fellows Training Course

Daily Reading Summaries

name:_____

date:_____

Title of text:

How long it took to read:

Level of difficulty: 1) very easy 2) fairly easy 3) average 4) hard 5) very hard

Level of interest: 1) very dull 2) ho-hum 3) hm . . . 4) neat 5) WOW!

Things you liked most and/or least about this piece:

Other comments?:

Title of text:

How long it took to read:

Level of difficulty: 1) very easy 2) fairly easy 3) average 4) hard 5) very hard

Level of interest: 1) very dull 2) ho-hum 3) hm . . . 4) neat 5) WOW!

Things you liked most and/or least about this piece:

Other comments?:

to: Professor Nancy Caddigan, Capital Community Technical College
Dean Dorothy Abrahamse, California State University, Long Beach
Professor Diane De Echeandia, SUNY Delhi
Marcus Rivera, Coordinator, Hartford Urban Education Network, University of Hartford
Professor Petra Clark-Dufner, University of Connecticutt, West Hartford
Professor Amy Parelman, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

from: Richard Blakely, University of Rhode Island
date: May 26, 1995

I am very sorry to report that the President, the Provost, and the Dean of Arts & Sciences at URI have decided that they cannot support our proposal to dessiminate the English Language Fellows Program at your institutions. I am particularly sorry because this decision was made at the last minute---I actually learned about it yesterday morning while putting the final packet together to send out in time for the deadline---and after all of you had put so much time into preparing your own parts of the proposal.

I am enclosing a copy of the complete proposal, along with supporting documents. You will see that it would have been an exciting project, and that we had good reason to be hopeful about its chances of funding from FIPSE.

I would like to say that I hoped to work with all of you (that is, those of you who were still willing), to find other ways of making this project work, but I fear that this decision not to support our project will also result in the termination of the English Language Fellows Program at URI when funding from FIPSE runs out on August 31.

I hope you will accept my deepest apologies for having made you go to all this work for nothing.

cc: Dr. Charles Storey, FIPSE
Professor Marguerite Ann Snow, CSU Los Angeles
Professor Phyllis Kuehn, CSU Fresno
Professor Sarah Benesch, CUNY Staten Island
Sharon R. Forleo, Assistant Director, Talent Development, URI
Professor Cheryl Foster, Philosophy Department, URI
Glenn R. Erickson, Director, Instructional Development, URI
Professor Don Kunz, English Department, URI
Professor James Loy, Anthropology Department, URI
Sandra L. Pearlman, Coordinator, Learning Assistance Network,URI
Professor William Rosen, Chemistry Department, URI
President Robert Carothers, URI
Provost M. Beverly Swann, URI
Dean Steffen Rogers, URI

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July 18, 1995

Dear Fellows:

I'm afraid the news is not good. On May 25 President Carothers decided not to support my application for a second federal grant which, as you may recall, would have made the program a permanent part of the institution. Two weeks later I learned that when current funding runs out the end of the summer, my own position will be terminated, and funding for the Fellows will be eliminated.

To me, this means the end of the program. To some (i.e., the President and the Provost), the program is simply being "scaled down." To explain what they mean by "scaling down," I am enclosing a copy of a memo I recently sent to the President.

As you may imagine, my emotions about this are mixed. On one hand I am both appalled and furious at the administration for leading all of us to believe that they thought this program was important and that it would continue to be funded. But I am also saddened and sorry for you, for in the end it is the students---you and your nonnative-speaking classmates---who are being cheated and short-changed by this deplorable situation which, I am certain, could have been avoided.

The question is what to do now, or rather, what, if anything, can be done. If you act as a group, and enlist the support of parents, friends, etc., I think there is a slight chance that the administration could be persuaded to restore at least some of the funding. In fact I recently learned that a small amount of funding has been restored, so perhaps all is not lost.

What I would suggest is that you go ahead and meet at the times we scheduled during our last workshop at Alton Jones, to figure out what you want to do. Since the beginning, this program has been created for and by students, and I think it is you students who should decide if and how it will continue. I know some of you may want to continue working with E-Ls on a voluntary basis, both for the practical experience and simply because they will continue to need your help. If you do this however, I would caution you to remember that this is exactly what the administration is hoping you will do, and not to let yourselves be used unwittingly. At any rate, the meetings we scheduled were for Tuesday, September 5, 4:00, for senior fellows (those who have participated in the program at least two semesters), and Thursday, September 7, 4:00, for everyone in the program. I have reserved Independence 205 for both meetings. It now looks like Anne Benson will be teaching one of the ELS courses in the fall, so she too will be on hand to offer support.

Whatever happens, and whatever you decide to do, I want you to know that I will be glad to continue to provide guidance and advice next year via e-mail, and that I hope to stay in touch with all of you in the years to come. Despite this discouraging turn of events, I consider the first three years of the program an enormous success---which I know will serve as a model at other institutions---and that success is due to the enthusiasm, idealism, and hard work of each one of you.

Yours,

Richard Blakely

c: Anne Benson

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Independence Hall, Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
Phone: 401-792-5931 Fax: 401-792-2580

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Appendix C

Documents for ESL 201

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FELLOWS PROGRAM
Participating Student Questionnaire

(To be filled out by all students enrolling in sections of ELS 201.)

name:_____ I.D. _____

local address:_____ phone:_____

home address:_____ phone:_____

name of content course: _____ name of Fellow_____

time and place of complementary study sessions:_____

I understand that the purpose of these complementary study sessions is to enable me to continue improving my English while studying the course content, and that the texts for this 1-unit section are Grammar Troublespots and the English Learner's Dictionary. I also understand that in order to receive the extra unit of credit for ELS 201 I must attend at least 80% of the supplementary sessions, and do all of the extra language work they may require.

signed:_____ date:_____

So that we may get a clear idea of your academic background, and better understand your needs and desires in learning English, please answer the following questions.

Year at URI: Fr. ___ So.___ Jr. ___ Sr.___ (Intended) Major_____

What is your native language?_____.

Have you participated in the ELF program before? If so, list courses in which you enrolled in sections of ELS 201, and the name of the Fellow who worked with you.

Please rate your own proficiency in the following skills:

Reading: very good___ good___ fair___ poor___ very poor___

Writing: very good___ good___ fair___ poor___ very poor___

Listening: very good___ good___ fair___ poor___ very poor___

Speaking: very good___ good___ fair___ poor___ very poor___

Under the following headings, indicate which you need to work the most on, and would like to concentrate on, if possible, in this course. Circle the heading/s you feel you feel you need to improve most urgently. (In describing your needs within each heading, please be as specific as you can. For example, if you want to improve your pronunciation, which sounds do you think you need to concentrate on: r, l, v, b, vowels, etc. Or if you want to improve your grammar, which parts of grammar give you the most problems: verbs, articles, etc.)

Listening: (classroom lectures, tv/radio, conversations, etc. . .)

Speaking: (pronunciation, oral presentations in class, conversations, . . .)

Reading: (textbooks, literature, newspapers, magazines, ...)

Writing: (papers, lab reports, stories, poetry, letters, . . .)

Grammar: (verb forms, tenses, articles, ...)

Vocabulary: (what kind?)

In the space provided below, please write a short paragraph describing why you wish to enroll in this section of ELS 201, and what you hope to get out of it.

English Language Fellows Program
ELS 201- Daily Course Reports
(To be filled in by the Fellow after every study session. Please use the back of this sheet, or attach additonal pages, if necessary.)

Name of Fellow:_____

Content course: _____

Session #____ Date and time of session:_____Place:_____

Length of session: _____ (from:_____ to:_____)

Amount of time spent in preparation:_____

Names of NNS students present:

1. Course-related study or activity:

2. Language-related study/activity:

3. Other comments:

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English Language Fellows Program - Spring 95
Open Sections of 201
(updated 1/24/95)

Supplementary English language study sessions (ELS 201) may be available for the following courses. Non-native speakers who enroll in any of these courses and wish to take an additional 1-unit course to study English, based on the content of the course, should contact Richard Blakely, Independence Hall, room 169 (tel. 792-4686).

Course	Time	Professor	Fellow*
AAF 150 01	MWF 9	Weisbord	Theresa B.
ACC 202 05	T Th 9:30-10:45	Vangermeesch	Robert G., Karen P
APG 201 01	MWF 9	Loy J.	Jennifer K., Celeste
ARH 251 02	MW 2-3:15	Hollishead M.	Jennifer K.
ART 344 01	MW2-4:45	Rohm R.	Jennifer K.
BCH 311 01	MWF 10	Hartman K.	Bonnie K.
BIO 102 02	T Th 10& M1-2:50	Staff	Jeff K.
CHM 102 06	W11-1:45	Staff	Jeff K.
CHM 112 01	MWF 9	L. Kirschenbaum	Ed Allie
CHM 112 02	MW10	Euler W.	Jeff K.
CHM 114 03 Lab	W 2-4:45	Staff	Ed Allie
CHM 228 01	MWF 11	Rosen	Bonnie K.
CMD 376 01	T Th 9:30-10:45	Preece	Christopher & Lauri
CMD 475 01	W 2-3:50	Beaupre	Christopher R
COM 103	R 6-8:45 (Prov.)		Deb. K.
CSC 301 01	T Th 2-3:15	Ravikumar	Brian C.
CSC 311 02	MWF 1	Carrano F.	Christy J & Brian C.
ECN 201 04 *	T TH 11-12:15	Sharif	Brian C.
ECN 202, 04	MW, 2-3-15	Suzawa	Karen P.
EDC 102 01	T Th 3;00-4:45	Willis	Devon P.
EDC 250	T 8-12	Soderberg	Sheila
EDC 312 01	MWF9	Soderberg	Lauri M.
ELE 205 01	MW 10	Uht	Christy J.
	Lab M 3-4:45		
ELE 212 01	MWF 8	Sadasiv	Christy J.
ELE 215 01	F10	Sadasiv	Christy J.
	Lab Th 2-4:45	Sunak	
ENG 205 01	T Th 9:30-10:45	Cappello	Moura M.& Amanda
ENG 241 02	MWF 12	Kennedy	Ian F.
ENG 243 03	T Th 9:30-10:45	Schoonover E	Rebecca B.
ENG 243 04 *	T Th 11:00- 12:15	Kunz	Devon P.
ENG 251	T R 2-3:15	MacLaine	Ian F.
ENG 252 04	T Th 12:30-1:45	Jacobs	Moura M.
ENG 260 02	T Th 11-12:15	S. Burke	Theresa B.
ENG 265 01	MWF 10	Camacho	Amanda L.
ENG 349 01	T Th 2- 3:15	Pearlman	Moura M.
ENG 350 01	T Th 11-12:15	Walton	Moura M.
ENG 385C 01	T Th 8-9:15	Sullivan	Moura M & Theresa
FSN 207 01 *	MWF 11	Gerber L.	RebeccaB, Pritee, Lauri, Amanda
HIS 142 01	MW 10 (rec. F 10)	Findlay	Robyn
HIS 171 02	T Th 11:00-12:15	Kim	Rebecca B, Bonnie
HPR 107b 01	W 2:00-4:50	Hagopian	Devon &Shirley

HPR 202D 01	M 7:30, W 7-10pm		Heidi
JOR 220 01	MW 1-2:50	Levin	Amanda
JOR 220 02	TR 1-2:15	Takach	Theresa
JOR 311 01	MWF 10	Levin	Theresa
MAF 220 01	T Th 12:30-1:45	Nixon	Jeff.
MTH 108 03	T Th 12:30-1:45	Finizio N.	Ian
MTH 131 03	T Th 11-12:15	Staff	Jeff K.
MTH243 01	MWF 10	Sine, R.	Brian C.
MTH 362 01	MWF 9	Liu	Christy J.
MUS 101, 04	MWF 2	Danis	Al
NUR 100 01	T Th 11-12:15	Evans M.	Pritee P.
PCL 225 01	MF 1	Swonger A.	Pritee P.
PHL 101, 04 *	MW 3-4:15	Wenisch	Rebecca F.
PHL 103 02?	TR 9:30-10:45	Foster, G	Celeste
PHL 103 03	T Th 11-12:15	Foster G.	Amanda L.
PHL 103 06	MWF 10	Hanley C.	Ian F.
PHL 212	TR 2-3:15		Deb K.
PHL 342 01	MWF 11	Schwartz	Rebecca F.
PHL 355 01 *	TR 2-3:15	Foster	Rebecca F.
PHT 440x 01	T Th 12:30-4:30	Preece & 2 others	Christopher R.
PHY 140 01	TR 2-3:15	staff	Robyn & Murray
PHY 306 01	T Th 9:30-10:45	Desjardins	Christy J.
PHY204 01	MWF 9	Muller, G.	Brian C
PHY274 04&R01	Th 8-9:50&Th 1	Staff	Brian C.
PSC 116 01	MW 10	Genest	Shirley C.
PSY 113 01	MW 12	Boatright	Devon P.
PSY 113 R12	F 9 recitation	Staff	Devon P.
PSY 113 01&R1	MW12& W2	Boatright S.&staff	Pritee P
PSY 232 01	TR 8:30	Myles	Robyn
PSY 232 02	T Th 2-3:15	Brady	Jennifer K.
PSY 232 01	MWF 1	Willis	Christopher R. & Jenn C.
PSY 235	TR 12:30-1:45		Deb K.
PSY 301 03 *	MWF 11-12:50	Collyes	Shirley C.
QBA 202, 04	MWF 12	Gesmondi	Karen P.
QBA 202 05	T Th 12:30-1:45	Chen	Robert G.
RLS111 01	T Th 12:30-1:45	Wenisch	Dana P.
SOC 100 02	T Th 9:30-10:45	Chabot R.	Ian F.
SOC 216 01 *	MWF 10	Chabot, R.	Lauri
SPA 103 03	MWF 10	Desjarlais, R.	Ed Allie
SPA 104 03	MWF 10	Staff	Jennifer K.
SPA 205 01	MWF 9	Davidson	Amanda L
STA 307	MWF 9		Bonnie
THE 100 01	T Th 9:30-10:45	Martindale	Pritee P.
THE 111 02	MW3-$:25	Hehnaure P.	Jeff K.
THE 352 01	TR 11-12-15		Heidi
WRT 101 01	MWF 8	Hope, P	Ed Allie
WRT 101, 19	MWF 1	staff	Karen P.
WRT 103, 01 *	MWF10	Pelensky	Robert G.
WRT 227 02 **	MWF 9	Vaughn	Robert G.
ZOO 121 06	MW 11 T Th 10-11:50	C. Shoop	Ed Allie
ZOO 202 01	TR 11-12:15 T 2-4:50	Dr. Bibb	Jenn C.

***English Language Fellows:**

Ed Allie; Albert Anderson; Theresa Bartnick; Rebecca Brewster; Brian Clayton; Shirley Consuegra; Aracely Cuevas; Jenn Cooper; Rob Ganim; Ian Farrell; Foluke Fayanjuola; Rebecca Flinn; Christy Julian; Jeff Kierman; Bonnie Kolor; Sheila Lawless; Amanda Lennon; Chelsea Lynch; Lauri Monteiro; Moura McGovern; Devon Palmanteer; Pritee Patel; Dana Petro; Christopher Rasmussen; Murray Reed; Robyn Reilly; Celeste Sorel; Heidi Wright;

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(Sample of letter sent at the beginning of the semester to all instructors with Fellows in their courses.)

September 13, 1994

Dear Professor «prof»:

One of our English Language Fellows, «fellow», is enrolled in section «section #» of «course», which you are teaching this fall. With your permission, «1st name» will be able to provide English language instruction for up to 3 non-native-speaking students who might also be taking your course and in need of such assistance.

Within the next few days, either during your office hours or before or after class, «1st name» will introduce «his/her»self to you, to talk about the possibility of «his/her» conducting a complementary English language study section, and ways of contacting NNS students in your course who might be interested.

I am enclosing a brochure which describes the Program in more detail, but if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss with me, please feel free to call me at 4686, or at home at 789-0832.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Blakely

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Independence Hall, Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
Phone: 401-792-5931 Fax: 401-792-2580

English Language Fellows Program
Confirmed sections of ELS 201, spring 1995

course	fellow	English-learners	time/place
*APG 201, 01 MWF 9	Celeste	Chean Men Dominique Jusme	Union Square MW 10 am
*APG 201, 01 MWF 9	Jennifer K	Delfina Ganeto	Taft (Malcolm X) T/R: 3:30-4:30
*BCH 311, 01 MWF 10	Bonnie	Chu Chin Chenk	Malcolm X T 6-7:30,R 3-4:30
CHM 112, 01 MW 10	Ed	Anna Phimmasen	Library, T 6-7:30, R 5:30-7
*CHM 228, 01 MWF 11	Bonnie	Chu Chin Chenk	Malcolm X T 6-7:30,R 3-4:30
COM 103 (CCE) R 6-8:45	Deborah	Victor Carporan	CCE Providence
ECN 201, 04 T R 3-4:45	Brian	Dat Nguyen	TR, 10 am Library
EDC 250 T 8-12	Sheila	Yer Vang .	R, 2-4:30 Indep 169
ELE 205	Christy	Bounvily Kue Kin Mui Jose	R 1:30-1 2:30 F 2-3 Taft.
ELE 212	Christy	Francisco Kin Mui	M 2-3 Taft W 4-5 Taft
*ENG 243, 03 T R 9:30-10:45	Rebecca B.	Chean Men	M, 12-? Indep. 169
ENG 243, 04 T R 11-12:15	Devon	Phuong Tran	M 4:30 R 2: Library
FSN 207 MWF 11	Amanda Lennon	Ron Ung Sam ? Vong Vongsouvane	T/R. 2 pm; Butterfield study lounge w/.Sam Sunday ?
*FSN 207-B MWF 11	Pritee Patel	Yer Vang	T 2-4 Library
*FSN 207-C MWF 11	Rebecca B.	Vong Vonsouvane Ruth ___ Abbi ___	Sun. 5-7 Taft or Union

*HIS 171 R R 11-12:15	Rebecca B.	Chean Men Michael Chuon	F 12 noon Union
*JOR 220 MW 1-2:50	Theresa	Mari Ono	M. 11, Union
*JOR 311 MWF 10	Theresa	Mari Ono	W. 11, Union
*MTH 362, 01 MWF 9	Christy	Wei Guang Guan Jose	M 11am-noon R 12:30-1:30 lib. 2nd floor
MUS 101, 04 MWF 2	Al	Yukiko Iijima	
*PHL 101, 04 MW 3-4:15	Rebecca F.	Darin Chea	TR 4-5 Hutch. Study Lnge
*PHL 103, 02 T R 9:30-10:45	Celeste	Ha Tran	M 7-8 Merrow 201 W, 2-3 #354 Union
*PHL 335 T R 2-3:15	Rebecca F.	Orady	M W 4:30-5:30 library
*PHY 140, 01 T R 2-3:15	Murray	Achmad Tarmizi Zulhalai	W 11, library (temp)
PHY 140, 01-B T R 2-315	Robyn	Abdul Halim Azrina Kamaruddin	W 11, library
PHY 204, 01 MWF 9	Brian	Dat Nguyen	M 2: Library W 3: library
PHY 274 R 8-9:50, 1-2	Brian	Dat Nguyen	M 6-8 Library
*PSY 232, 01 MWF 1	Chris R.	Ruth Bernard	
*PSY 232, 01-B MWF 1	Jenn C.	Abbi Yussuf	Union
*PSY 301, 03 MWF 11-12:50	Shirley	Mike Chuon	Union
*PHY 306 T R 9:30-10:45	Christy	Wei Guang Guan Jose	W. 11-12
SOC 100, 02 T R 9:30-10:45	Ian Farrell	Mon Lor My Baccam	M/W 3-4 Library

SOC 216, 01 MWF 10	Lauri	Ron Ung	W 2:30-5 Taft
*STA 307, MWF 9	Bonnie	Chu Chin Chenk	Malcolm X T 6-7:30,R 3-4:30
*WRT 103, 01 MWF 10	Rob	Michael Chuon	M/W 1-2 Taft
*WRT 227, 02 MWF 9	Rob	Li Lei	R 3-5 Taft
*ZOO 202, 01 TR 11-12:15 T 2-4:50	Jenn C.	Nancy __	

*Sections taught by senior fellows.

Appendix D

Article to appear in College ESL

The English Language Fellows Program

Richard Blakely

This program was conceived when a student who had taken two ESL courses with me in his freshman year, whom I will call Tran, came back to take a literature course I was teaching four years later (in order to fulfill a general education requirement so that he could graduate) and almost failed. Most distressing to both of us was the obvious fact that in four years of taking courses towards his B.A. in Accounting, Tran's English not only had not improved, it had actually deteriorated. As a freshman, Tran was one of the top students in his ESL classes, making discernible progress in all four skills, especially reading and writing. As a senior, he could not write a complex sentence. A paragraph of Jack London or Hemingway was an impenetrable mystery, which he would spend agonizing hours trying to understand.

The following year I was given a copy of a letter written by another nonnative-speaking student who had also taken the two ESL courses offered by the University during his first year, and done well in them. The letter has been transcribed exactly as it was written, with minor deletions, and it is reproduced here with permission of the author, who said that if it can help people understand the plight of non-native speakers at his own campus and beyond, it will at least have served a purpose.

Cambodia is the Place I origonaly bore. Then I alway wanted to be a constructor, civil Engineering and a Mathematician. I never have the opportunity te achieve all of these goals, because of the poverty of the country.

Now I am in the processing of getting the American's citizenship . . . I am a senior in B.S. of Applies Mathematic and a sophomore in civil Engeneering.

One day the [state agency that was sponsoring a special job training program] was introduced by one of the civil Engineering dean in my . . . (mechanical of solid) class. The movement I heard the program, I was so happy and affraid. The reason I affraid because I am not a 2.5 grade point average student and happy because I know that this is once of a life time opportunity that I alway dream off, and that the reason that I send this letter at the last minutes.

Again I am a senior in Applies Mathematic and sophomore in civil engineering. I had completed the requirements up to second year of civil engineering, I am interesting in constructing, built a building, road, bridge and house. I have no experience as I already precribed but I had work experience at many place such as in the industrial, factory, Painting and fixing house.

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Needless to say, the student did not get the job. Moreover, both he and his fiancée, also a native speaker of Khmer and a recent graduate of the University, have yet to find gainful employment in his or her chosen field. Because of their limited (and limiting) English, one has to wonder if they ever will.

The stories of these students are not as uncommon as one would like to believe. In fact, they illustrate a problem that, if left unchecked, threatens to undermine the very foundation on which public higher education in this country is based: more and more immigrant, linguistic minority students who graduate from U.S. colleges and universities are for all intents and purposes illiterate, unable to get jobs for which they have been trained, incapable of becoming productive, integrated members of society.[1]

The solution to this problem is not merely to give non-native-speaking students one or two more courses in ESL---courses which are usually considered "remedial," which often do not bear credit, and which the students themselves do not want to take---but to give them the opportunity, as well as the desire, to continue studying English throughout their years as undergraduates.

The English Language Fellows Program does just that. To encourage non-native-speaking (NNS) students to persevere with the task of continuing to perfect their English, while getting their degrees (and often working long hours to pay for their studies) continual, cumulative study of the language counts for <u>real</u> credit, towards graduation. To make it relevant to other courses they are taking, and to their future plans for a career, this language study is content-based.[1]

The English Language Fellows Program is a pilot project, now in its third year, supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The program pairs specially-trained native-speaking undergraduates with NNS classmates to study the content of courses that both are taking together. Woven into that study of course content, for the benefit of the NNS students, is the study of language as it is used to communicate and understand the course material. This content-based English language study is generated by the specially-trained Fellow, who organizes and conducts the study sessions. For running those sessions, the Fellow is paid

an hourly wage. For attending them regularly and doing the extra language study that they require, the English-learning students receive an extra unit of credit, in addition to the three units awarded for the content course.

This article will briefly describe how the Fellows are selected and how they are trained, then it will take a closer look at what they actually do in those 1-unit sections that complement content courses.

Every semester fifteen exceptional students with native or near-native proficiency in English, preferably in their first or second year, are selected as potential Fellows. Criteria for selection include strong faculty recommendations, good grades, high SAT scores, an interest and background in foreign languages and cultures, and a desire to make the university, and the world beyond it, a better place. (A copy of the application form, and other program-related documents, may be found in the Appendix.)

Once accepted, these fifteen students take a semester-long training seminar, now a regular, three-credit university course. This course is divided into three parts: WHO, WHAT, and HOW. The first part focuses on the people the program is designed to serve---specifically, growing numbers of NNS immigrants in this country---where they come from, why they are here, and some of the problems they face once they arrive. During this phase of the course students read texts, see films, and carry out activities we hope will show them what it is like to be a nonnative speaker in this country. A good example of one of the shorter texts is "Mother Tongue," by Amy Tan (1990), where the author describes how almost every aspect of her mother's life in the U.S. was adversely affected, simply because she spoke with an accent. Because of her "impeccable broken English," her daughter says, "people in department stores, at banks, and at restaurants did not take her seriously, did not give her good service, pretended not to understand her, or even acted as if they did not hear her."

Part II of the training course explores the field of second language acquisition, with emphasis on particular difficulties a native speaker of another language is likely to encounter in learning English. In this phase we introduce the four traditional skills---listening, speaking, reading and writing, and also spend some time discussing grammar and vocabulary acquisition.

In part III, students begin to think about how they will put this knowledge to use as Fellows in the program, working with English-learning

classmates in preparing for an exam, for example, or writing a paper, or rehearsing an oral presentation. During these last three to four weeks we try to impress upon the future Fellows the newness of what they will be doing. Pairing high-achieving native speakers with at-risk linguistic minority classmates in such an extensive, systematic fashion has never been done before. Nothing has yet been written which applies directly to what they will be called upon to do in their 1-unit study sections. So in order to define what Fellows are, we must first define what they are not. They will not be teachers, for example, nor tutors, in the strictest sense, nor even "peer tutors." In fact, "tutoring" and "helping" are words we caution them not to use, for both imply a power relationship between a giver and a receiver that runs counter to the cooperative spirit on which the program is based.[2] Indeed, after three semesters of operation---48 English language study sections offered in conjunction with other courses---Fellows are unanimous in saying they "received" as much in those sections as the NNS classmates with whom they worked. So for lack of an appropriate term, we tell the Fellows-to-be to think of themselves as "privileged collaborators in learning," the privilege being their native understanding of the language of instruction.[3]

In comparison with other tutor training programs, most would agree that this is more broad-based and thorough. As a semester-long course, it involves forty-five hours of class time and requires well over 100 hours of outside reading and preparation.[4] Plus, it's for credit---an integral part of the university curriculum. But even in a fifteen-week course, no matter how demanding, we cannot do much more than introduce so many different areas, and this is why at the end of the semester we tell the students this is just the beginning. The real learning starts then.

This course is called, simply, "Becoming an English Language Fellow," and the word "becoming" is important. Because it exposes traditional, native-speaking undergraduates to people and problems most of them were not aware of previously, it is, for many, an eye-opener. Students say that after taking the course they see things differently, they are not the same people they were before. An anecdote may serve as an example.

When this course was first offered in the spring of 1993 a student who was taking it came up after class to relate an experience he had had a few days previously. For most people this experience would have seemed insignificant,

but for Murray, in light of what he had been reading recently, it was earthshaking. Once or twice a week Murray would get together with friends to play volleyball. These were mostly people he knew, old friends from high school, but others who happened to be there would often join in. One day after they had finished playing, Murray was going around asking people if they wanted to go on to a local campus hangout. The way he described it, he was going up to people one by one, asking if they wanted to come along, when suddenly he realized he had passed one person up, someone who, as a matter of fact, turned out to be an immigrant from India. Realizing what he had done, Murray went back and asked him too, and the Indian gratefully accepted. What Murray found so amazing, and at the same time so difficult to admit, was that up until that moment this darker-skinned student, even though he'd played with them on several occasions, had been to him invisible. As he said after class, still visibly shaken, "How could I not have seen that guy before?"

And that is precisely the problem. At the University of Rhode Island, as, I suspect, at many other U.S. colleges and universities where linguistic minorities have not yet become the majority, immigrant NNS students are marginalized not only by their own feelings of inadequacy and lack of confidence in English, but by the fact that to large segments of the traditional campus population---students, faculty, and administrators---these students, and the problems they bring with them, are virtually invisible.[5]

So if this course causes scales to drop from the eyes of even a few of the students who take it, one could argue that the program has already succeeded. But as stated above, the end of the course is only the beginning.

As to the "real learning" that goes on in the 1-unit study sections, for both the Fellows and their NNS classmates, perhaps the best way to describe it here is to summarize a typical example of one of those sections.

Rebecca B. took the Fellows training course the second semester of her freshman year, spring 1994. The following semester, one of the courses she enrolled in was a "gen ed" anthropology course in which there were two NNS classmates: Y, a student in her third year from Japan, who plans to return to Japan after graduation, and D, a first year student, who immigrated to this country from Cambodia in 1987. With the approval of the course instructor (and with his enthusiastic support) Rebecca arranged to meet with D and Y twice a week for the rest of the semester. Before their first meeting, Y and D

both filled out a two-page questionnaire, assessing their own strengths and weaknesses in English, and signed a brief "contract," enrolling them in a section of English Language Studies 201. This is a one-unit tutorial course, offered under the auspices of the ELF program, which qualifying nonnative speakers at the university can take, "in conjunction with other courses," as many as twelve times.

After each meeting of these 1-unit sections, Fellows are required to fill out "Daily Course Reports," which are intended to help the program staff keep track of what goes on in each of them. The following summary of this particular section of ELS 201 will consist of excerpts from these course reports, quoting directly from the Fellow who wrote them (with her permission, and with minor editorial changes), and interspersed with occasional explanatory notes, as needed.

The complete report for session #1, although that session lasted a full hour, is very brief:

> We went through the chapters in the book that were going to be on the quiz. It was the first meeting so we talked about the program and got to know each other a little. I was very nervous.

Because of this last comment, the project director attended the beginning of the following session in an effort to help jump-start it, showing Rebecca, Y, and D how to go over notes from previous class lectures, and how to use reading assignments as a tool for vocabulary enhancement, as well as pronunciation and grammar practice. Noteworthy here is the fact that even though Rebecca, in the training course, had read and talked extensively about these strategies, and about working with students like Y and D, she still felt at a loss when it came to actually conducting a section of ELS 201 on her own. This is a very common occurrence among new Fellows, and understandably so, but it shows again that one can only learn by doing.

By the fourth meeting, Rebecca's course report gives ample indication that the section has now gotten off to a good start. The session lasted an hour and a half.

> We talked about the quiz we took today. Then we went through all of the lectures and they asked me for things that they had not heard, spelled or written correctly in their notes. . . They had a lot of questions and blank spaces where they had lost what the prof was saying.

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Then we did vocabulary from the lectures---words in the course and everyday words that I had written down for them. Then I discovered Y's "L and R" problem. We did the mouth diagram and then one of those lap/rap [minimal pair] exercises. We spent about 15 minutes on the word "world." They both read a paragraph from the book and we talked about pronunciation w/ D and flowing of the sentence w/ Y.

I felt good about this session. We accomplished a lot and did language stuff as well as studied. I think we're getting used to each other.

Meeting number 7 took place a week before the first exam. The course report for that session illustrates one of the major beneficial side effects of the program---the close personal relationships that often build among the participants:

[In writing the course reports, Fellows are invited to summarize their activities under three separate headings, 1) content-related, 2) language related, 3) miscellaneous, or other.]

1) We have an exam on Wed. so we rigorously went over the notes---they asked questions---we all discussed them. I had D explain the things he understood to Y and vice versa. All and all it was a great session. I got the feeling we all understood the material.

2) Of course, as usual, we did pronunciation (minimally). When they pronounced a word wrong I corrected them. I also discovered Y's hidden v and b problem. She wrote favor as "fabor."

3) I felt really good today because after the session we were talking and Y said they didn't have any programs like this at ___ [another state university she had attended the year before]. She said it was a real help and that I was good at what I do. Before, she barely spoke, now she's doling out compliments. It's a good feeling. The 3 of us really get along. So far it's been a very positive experience.

Unfortunately this enthusiasm was tempered by their grades on the exam. Although Rebecca got an A (97%), Y got a low C (70%) and D barely passed with 61%. To Rebecca, these low grades were puzzling. From studying with Y and D, she knew they both had a good grasp of the course material. Why then did they do so poorly? During session # 9, while trying to prepare them better for an upcoming quiz, she comes upon a possible answer:

. . . I had each of them give me a version of their main point of each chapter, which was successful. A few points they didn't understand, so we broke down each sentence in the paragraph and figured them out. I, in fact, learned a lot through that. Then we discussed what our prof had suggested we pay attention to for the quiz and I made sure they had those points down.

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We talked a little about the exam, but I told them we'd go over it in more depth tomorrow.

I then had a light bulb flash over my head, slapped my forehead and said "Duh!" I realized they both knew the material and that on the previous quizzes (and the exam) it was the wording that threw them off. I had known this but had no solution. So I pulled out the last quiz with them and we talked about the wording of the questions and the answers. I told them to look at every word and how to eliminate answers more efficiently. Note the quiz attached. [Rebecca had attached a copy of the quiz to the course report. Here is Question 1, which she refers to below:

> "Elizabeth Vrba's 'turnover-pulse' hypothesis states:
>
> a. that speciation and extinction follow major climatic (and thus environmental) fluctuations
>
> b. that cladistic analyses are based on false premises
>
> c. that evolutionary change is independent from climatic (environmental) change
>
> d. that dinosaurs evolved warm-bloodedness before mammals"]

D, on #1, had read "independent from" in letter C as "dependent on." So we talked about what prepositions go w/each (i.e. dependent on and independent from) thus stressing the importance of knowing the language and the grammar. We then went thru each question . . . then we eliminated each answer, either because it didn't make sense, didn't answer the question, wasn't even in the text, etc. I really think they felt better. . . Tomorrow [while taking the quiz] I think they will take their time and look at every word (so will I, by the way).

Rebecca's discovery points to a major problem NNS students encounter in their studies, and about which very little, in ESL literature, has been written---namely, the deceptive simplicity of so-called "objective" exams. Faced with a choice between a course graded primarily on the basis of written assignments, and another section of the same course where the grade depends exclusively on multiple choice or true/false exams, most NNS students will enroll in the second, assuming that it will be less challenging to their limited English and allow them to do better in the course. Rebecca's discovery here, and similar discoveries made by other Fellows in the program, indicate that the opposite may be true.

In their following session, Rebecca, Y, and D continued to explore this problem:

. . . We talked a lot about the exam, once again we dissected some of the questions and analyzed each word's importance. They both realized why they got questions wrong. In doing this we realized that there were indeed an abundance of tricks. I.e., one question was about this guy that everyone associated with sufficient similarity. One of the answers had "insufficient" in it, which threw almost everyone off. D couldn't believe in made such a difference. . .

Today I met w/ Prof. L. [the course instructor]. I told him what we were doing in the sessions. We talked about the exam and he suggested the possibility of the 3 of us taking it separately from the class so that they could ask me questions about unclear wording. . .

One of the responsibilities of Fellows is to touch base periodically with the instructors of the content courses, to tell them what they are doing in their meetings with the NNS students and ask their advice about any problems or difficulties those students might be having. Here, when Professor L. learned of Rebecca's concern that Y's and D's low grades might have been due more to lack of proficiency in English, than to a lack of knowledge of course material, he proposed that the three of them take the next exam in his office so that Rebecca could answer any questions Y and D might have while taking the test---not about content, certainly, but about any wording or vocabulary that might not be clear to them because of the fact that they were nonnative speakers.

Mindful now that she will be able to give them this sort of input, Rebecca focuses in their following sessions on the importance of looking at every word, something she discovers Y and D were not in the habit of doing.

Session #11:

. . . on Friday we talked about reading a sentence and skipping over the words they don't know. I asked Y if she knew what the text meant by "get a feel for something." She said no, so I asked what she does when she comes to something she doesn't know. She said if she can't understand the sentence she'll look it up, but otherwise she just skips over it. D agreed, so I told them that that is precisely when they should put a question mark on it and ask me. I made a rather big deal about how important it is to better their English so I think they'll start doing it. . .

[The end of this course report shows how much Fellows themselves stand to learn in these sessions---and not only about course material. Also in attendance at this session was C, another Cambodian student who is a member of the program staff.]

. . . In our class we had been talking about language so we continued the discussion in the session. I found out things like Y is only called Y by her parents. If anyone else called her that it would be an

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insult. All her friends call her Y-chan. I asked her if she wanted me to call her that so she'd feel more at home, but she said it didn't matter. I was really interested in C's and D's thoughts on assimilating. They both were saying they had to learn how to communicate with Americans entirely differently than [with] Cambodians, i.e., eye contact, closeness, touching. Fascinating stuff!

The course report for sessions 13 and 14 shows how much a Fellow's job has to do with trying to change habits, a process that for an immigrant student like D can be discouragingly slow and painful.

First I asked D [Y was absent for this session] if he had specific questions relating to the text. He had quite a few because the chapters are getting more and more complicated. We went over what he didn't understand and what was important to know. We then did vocabulary, which included "discordant, novelty or novel" (he thought novelty was a book), "palate, manipulate, harem, promiscuous, ergo, enhanced." All these words, I told D, were important to the sentences they were in. I gave him an example of how one word can make or break your understanding. The more I stress this, hopefully, the more he'll write down what he doesn't know. I told him all he had to do was underline and ask me. He said he knows this, but just wasn't in the habit of it.

Anyway, we did pronunciation and the biggest problem we faced was, of course, "th." He has a BIG problem with it. We did diagrams and different words---we'll probably work on it every session from now on. Also a really big problem was that, when reading from the book, every word w/o an s on the end, he adds one, and every word w/ an s on the end, he takes it off. It was the most frustrating thing for both of us. He couldn't stop doing it. Differences was difference. Trait was traits. We talked about why he does this. I couldn't really figure it out, but we just kept doing it and doing it until he said the sentence correctly.

Session # 14:

. . . One thing that was difficult were the words terrestrial and territorial. Both are used frequently in class and D can't distinguish between them. I told him to listen for the s, then realized he throws s around all over the place so I just had him sound them out and say them over and over again. We also talked about how I can't remember a word in Italian, my 2nd language, unless I say it and learn the correct pronunciation. I don't think he knew exactly what I meant but he agreed. So any word that was important I had him sound it out. . .

In the next few sessions leading up to the second mid-term the pace picks up. Session #18 was on a Sunday afternoon, the day before the exam, and lasted two hours. The course report shows the tension felt by all three. It also shows how richly Fellows deserve their hourly wage.

Y could only stay an hour so what I did w her was rushed. I gave her the practice exam of 25 questions that I had made up and she did really well. The ones she missed we talked about while D prepared questions to ask me about things he didn't understand. Then while Y finished the exam I explained some things that were unclear to D. I felt like I was really rushing both of them, but they seemed to get what I was saying. After Y finished the practice exam I quickly told her what points were important to study for the exam. I [had] spent almost an hour with [Prof.] L. Friday asking him things I didn't understand and what was important to know for the exam. Luckily he was extremely helpful. So Y had a good idea of what to concentrate on when she left. I worry about her. She rushes around so much I don't think she does anything but study. . . Basically today's session was devoted to recapping everything we've done since the last exam. I'm really nervous, actually, to take the exam, because I want to help them as much as I can w/o giving them the answers. We'll see how it goes.

D is improving, I think, all the time. The more he talks the better I understand him. For the next meeting we'll start doing some more pronunciation, since we've slacked off a little in preparing for the exam.

As proposed by Professor L., Rebecca, Y, and D took the exam at the scheduled time, but in his office, so that Rebecca could clear up any language problems Y and D might have as those problems arose. (To eliminate any doubts about what the three of them discussed during this time, a tape recorder was left on throughout the session.) Apparently the strategy worked, for on this second midterm, whereas Rebecca again scored 97%, this time Y scored 95%, and D 92%.

Throughout the remaining third of the semester the meetings between Rebecca, Y and D continued to follow the pattern established before the second mid-term---reviewing readings and lecture notes in preparation for quizzes and the final, doing some pronunciation as time permitted, but paying particular attention to specific words and phrases Y and D had trouble understanding. While a lot of these words were specific to course content, and difficult for native speakers to understand, many more were not, and the relative simplicity of that second category might seem surprising. Many educators at the college level tend to assume that their NNS students have already acquired a fairly extensive academic vocabulary, by virtue of having been admitted to the institution. The curious mix of content-specific, often very complex vocabulary, along with surprisingly simple words and phrases that Rebecca recorded in her course reports reveals the urgent need of Y and

D, and other students like them, to continue developing their vocabulary at a very basic level. Here is a good example of such a list, from an earlier session:

Vocabulary [that we discussed] included:

retention---retain
pentadactyly
digits
extensive
simultaneous (D figured this out from T.V., he knew the word "simulcast")
elaboration
de-emphasis
repertoire
modification
ballpark figure
more or less
ify---shaky
self-aware
relatively
nocturnal
hommoide,homminidae, hominoid, hommid,
tail between your legs.

During these last four weeks, Rebecca also kept in close touch with Professor L. who suggested they follow the same procedure for the final that they had followed for the second mid-term. "I thanked him," Rebecca wrote, "for being so flexible and concerned. . . He was really happy their grades had improved so dramatically." (From session #22.]

The course reports for this period, as the end of the semester draws nearer, have an increasingly frenetic, breathless quality about them. Reading them, one feels the mixture of apprehension and resignation that all students share at the end of the term, and which gives a college campus at that time of year the feeling of a storm about to break or a battle about to begin. Rebecca is by turns ecstatic and depressed, one day full of hope, the next day plunged into despair. Their session on December 12 was, she says, "by far the worst meeting ever." (Then she goes on to describe what sounds like one of the most interesting and beneficial sessions of the semester!) The following

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session, #24, she says "went great. We all had a couple of good laughs and got a lot done." Here is the report of session #25, in its entirety:

> Confusion was the trend of today. I was not prepared and very tired. Therefore, I spent a lot of time wondering if D and Y understood me. They weren't responsive at all. The more I thought they were confused, the more confused I became and then, of course, the more confused they became. Anyway we did get some things accomplished. We decided exactly what we need to study and how. Other than that, it was a loss.

The tone of the last course report, luckily, is more upbeat. "Today was a good meeting," Rebecca begins, then goes on to describe their elaborate preparations for the final exam.

Evident in these excerpts, and in fact in all of Rebecca's course reports throughout the semester, is an underlying element of doubt, a faint but constant questioning tone, as she is always wondering if she's doing the right thing, being as effective as she can be. "I'm not all that sure I'm doing everything I can," she says in #14, "but I'm trying." And in #18, "I wish I could do more, but I don't know what."

This constant self-questioning, a sense of finding the way as she goes along, is something Rebecca shares with all the Fellows, even the most experienced. Rather than being something to worry about, it can be seen as a sign of life, proof that the program is alive and well, for if the Fellows are constantly questioning and seeking, they are also finding answers and making discoveries ("I then had a light bulb flash over my head, slapped my forehead and said 'Duh!'") and it is this constant process of discovery that makes being a Fellow so rewarding. Best of all, they are making these discoveries on their own, truly taking charge of their own education, learning that learning comes from within.

In Rebecca's case, she has every reason to believe that the answers she found and the techniques she used were good ones, that if she wasn't necessarily doing "the right thing," she was certainly doing something right. On the final exam, Y scored 98%, giving her an overall course grade of A-, and D scored 75%, which earned him a C+. (Proving that working as a Fellow has a positive impact on one's own performance, Rebecca scored 100% on the exam and got an A for the course.)

Both Y and D agree that if they had not participated in the complementary section of ELS 201, they would not have done nearly so well in the course. In their final evaluative questionnaires, both said they did "much better" in the course because of these sessions, stressing in particular the value of going over lectures and focusing on content-specific vocabulary. As far as making progress in English, again, both students gave these sessions the highest ranking (5 on a scale of 1-5), and in their written comments said the sessions were particularly beneficial in the areas Rebecca stressed throughout the semester: pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition.

This section of ELS 201 differs from most of the others only in the amount of time Rebecca devoted to writing her daily course reports, and the extensive detail she put into them. In many other ways it is typical of all of them, however. Any other section in which there is more than one nonnative speaker, for example, poses the problem of finding a balance between each student's capabilities in English that Rebecca had to deal with here (and finally resolved by spendng more time with D, whose lower level put him at greater risk in the course). Granted, the fact that Y was an international student, D an immigrant, with all the characteristic differences that distinguish those two groups, made Rebecca's balancing act even harder. But even those Fellows working with students who come from similar backgrounds, and who speak the same native language, soon discover, as they get to know them better, that each student has widely divergent needs and learning styles. Hence our a priori assumption that every section of ELS 201 with more than one student in it will be a heterogenous mix, and will pose new and unexpected challenges to the Fellow.

Typical also is Professor L's readiness to make allowances in his testing procedures, for the benefit of Y and D. One of the most gratifying reactions to this program has been the willingness, even eagerness among faculty to accommodate it, and thereby accommodate the NNS students it serves. Examples of similar accommodations made by other instructors include giving special meetings for the students in the sections of ELS 201, along with their Fellows, to help them prepare for upcoming exams, giving NNS students additional lead time to prepare writing assignments, altering lectures to make them clearer to nonnative speakers by using more visuals, simplifying language, taking time to explain cultural references, etc., and finally,

changing the wording of tests, to make the questions easier to understand by NNS students.

Faced with drastically rising enrollments of NNS students on their campuses, some U.S. universities have undertaken extensive faculty development programs, hoping to sensitize professors to the problems these new students have, so that they will make appropriate changes in their courses. The only drawback to this approach is the perception among some faculty that such changes will dilute their courses and start them slipping down the slope towards "remediation." Some professors even go so far as to see the administration's proddings as an unwelcome intrusion in their disciplines, even as a possible threat to academic freedom.

By comparison, the changes already brought about by the ELF program at URI have been remarkably easy and harmonious, and when one thinks about it, the reason for this difference in attitude is fairly obvious. When an outstanding native-speaking student like Rebecca makes an appointment with her professor to talk about difficulties her NNS classmates are having in reading a textbook, or understanding lectures, that professor is liable to listen more carefully than if he were being talked to by a dean, or by an outside consultant. He is also liable to accept the changes he initiates, in consultation with the Fellow, not as a regrettable "dumbing down" of course material, which they are not, but as a natural response to changing student needs, of which he had been unaware. After three semesters of operation, 20 Fellows conducting complementary sections in 41 courses taught by 38 different professors, not one participating faculty member has complained that the program was intrusive or had anything but a positive impact on the the course. Instead, the majority have thanked the Fellows for bringing the problems of these non-traditional students to their attention, and so far eight report that they have changed the way they teach as a result.[6]

Another typical feature of Rebecca's section, and no doubt for some the most significant, was the effect it had on Y and D's performance in the content course, and the grades they both received. All NNS students who have completed complementary sections of ELS 201 say that those sections helped them do "better" or "much better" in the content courses, and this subjective response would appear to be corroborated by data we are now beginning to receive. In spring semester of 1994, the average grade of the NNS students in the 14 content courses for which they were taking complementary sections of

ELS 201 was 2.92. This compares to the overall average in those same courses, for native and nonnative speakers alike, of 2.34. Confirming again that conducting sections of ELS 201 has a beneficial effect on one's own grades, the average for Fellows in those courses was 3.62. Both the averages for the Fellows and for their NNS classmates in those courses was significantly higher than their overall GPA.

If the English Language Fellows Program continues to have such a positive impact on the grades of its participants, and to produce other results that are now coming in, and illustrated in the following charts, it seems safe to assume that pairing specially-trained native speakers with at-risk linguistic minority classmates is a good solution to the problems posed by ever-increasing numbers of immigrant students in our schools and colleges. Not only is it good for them, but it brings about changes in the overall instutitution that are good for us all.

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[1] For obvious reasons, little has (yet) been written about this issue. People worry about "access" and "retention," but little attention is paid to the difficulties faced by NNS students once their tuition has been paid and they are no longer a part of the system. A bleak assessment of this problem in the Chicago area appeared a few years ago in the Higher Education Newsletter of TESOL (Douglas K. Stuart, "ESL in Secondary Education and Articulation with Post-Secondary Programs," HEIS Newsletter, 1989.) And at the 1992 TESOL conference, Robin Scarcella gave an alarming description of the situation in California, specifically at U.C. Irvine, where professors are throwing up their hands in despair, because they can no longer communicate with a majority of their students.

[1] For more on content-based language instruction, see Benesch (1988), Brinton, Snow , and Wesche (1989), Cantoni-Harvey (1987), etc. (A more comprehensive listing of references on content-area instruction can be found in the Bibliography.) In fact the ELF program was modeled in part on the Brown Writing Fellows Program (Haring-Smith, 1983) and on Foreign Language Across the Curriculum programs that are now springing up all over the country (see Kreuger & Ryan, 1993). Strictly speaking, the ELF program is a FLAC program, except that here the F.L. is the language of general instruction.

[2] And which according to some is actually antithetical to learning. See Bruffee, 1984, and also Langer, 1984, for a cautionary note about the harm in helping.

[3] One could also use Vygotsky's term "more capable peers," with the caveat that the greater capability of the native speaker is due only to her innate familiarity with the language, not to a higher "actual developmental level."

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Indeed, if her classmate were a native speaker of Vietnamese, and they were studying at a university in Vietnam, it is the class mate who would be more capable.

Bruffee (1993), although keeping the terms "peer tutors" and "tutees," takes pains to stress their equality. "In peer tutoring this equality means, first of all, that the students involved---peer tutor and tutee alike---believe that they both bring an important measure of ability, expertise, and information to the encounter and, second, that they believe that they are institutional status-equals: both are students, clearly and unequivocally." (p. 83)

[4] Most tutor-training programs, even those which are offered for credit, do not involve more than thirty hours---the number necessary to qualify for the "Master/Level 3" (highest) Certification of Tutor Programs by the national College Reading and Learning Association.

[5] This blindness on the part of those who pride themselves on their ability to see (academics in an academic environment), is the subject of Mike Rose's Lives on the Boundary, which was one of the sources of inspiration for the ELF program, especially chapters 7 and 8. "Class and culture erect boundaries that hinder our vision . . ." says Rose, "and encourage the designation of otherness, difference, deficiency." (p. 205)

[6] This potential of "peer tutors . . . to act as agents of institutional change" is the subject of an entire chapter in Bruffee (1993). As Bruffee describes it, this change seems almost subversive in nature, in that it "goes to the very root of the educational process. It is challenging traditional prerogatives and assumptions about the authority of teachers and the authority of knowledge. It is saying that peer tutors have the potential for helping to change the interestes, goals, values, assumptions, and practices of teachers and students alike." (p. 82)

English Language Fellows Program

. . . Weaving English into every discipline

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For more and more students at URI, English is a foreign language. This program enables these students to continue learning English while studying other courses. This content-based English language study is carried out in supplementary sessions, organized by specially-trained English Language Fellows, who take the content courses right along with their non-native-speaking classmates.

For conducting these sessions, the Fellow is paid an hourly wage. For attending them regularly and doing the extra language work that they require, the non-native speakers receive an extra unit of credit towards graduation.

English-learning students who participate in the program all agree that they learn more and get better grades in the content courses than if they studied on their own. They also increase their overall confidence in English, and are able to get assistance in improving the following skills:

- writing papers
- reading textbooks
- understanding lectures
- preparing for exams
- giving oral presentations

Best of all, they make new friends and discover the pleasures of working together in small groups that reflect the rich diversity of campus life at URI.

This program differs from most other tutorial/ELS programs in three important ways:

1. *The training the Fellows receive is both broad-based and thorough,* consisting of a semester-long, 3-unit course (English Language Studies 200) on teaching and learning English as a foreign language and on techniques of Collaborative Learning.

2. *The Fellows take the content course right along with the classmates they are assisting,* thereby ensuring their own active involvement in the course material and fostering an atmosphere of mutual collaboration.

3. *Successful completion of each supplementary study session is worth an extra unit of credit,* as ELS 201, in addition to the three units awarded for the content course. This one-unit course may be repeated up to twelve times throughout a student's undergraduate years.

Thus it is possible for non-native-speaking students at URI to continue studying English, for credit, throughout their years as undergraduates.

To ensure the quality of language study in the 1-unit sections of ELS 201, the number of students who may enroll in each section is limited to three. If you are an English Learner and wish to participate in the program, we urge you to call or come by the office during pre-registration period for a list of courses in which complementary sections of ELS 201 will be available the following semester.

Want To Become A Fellow?

Every semester, fifteen outstanding undergraduates in their first or second year are selected to become Fellows in the program. If you are interested in applying, contact the office below.

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